MARY I AND PHILIP OF SPAIN: A TUDOR LOVE STORY?

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING H-BOMB SECRETS

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HISTORY REVEALED

WHAT IF... BRITAIN AND FRANCE HAD GONE TO WAR IN 1898?

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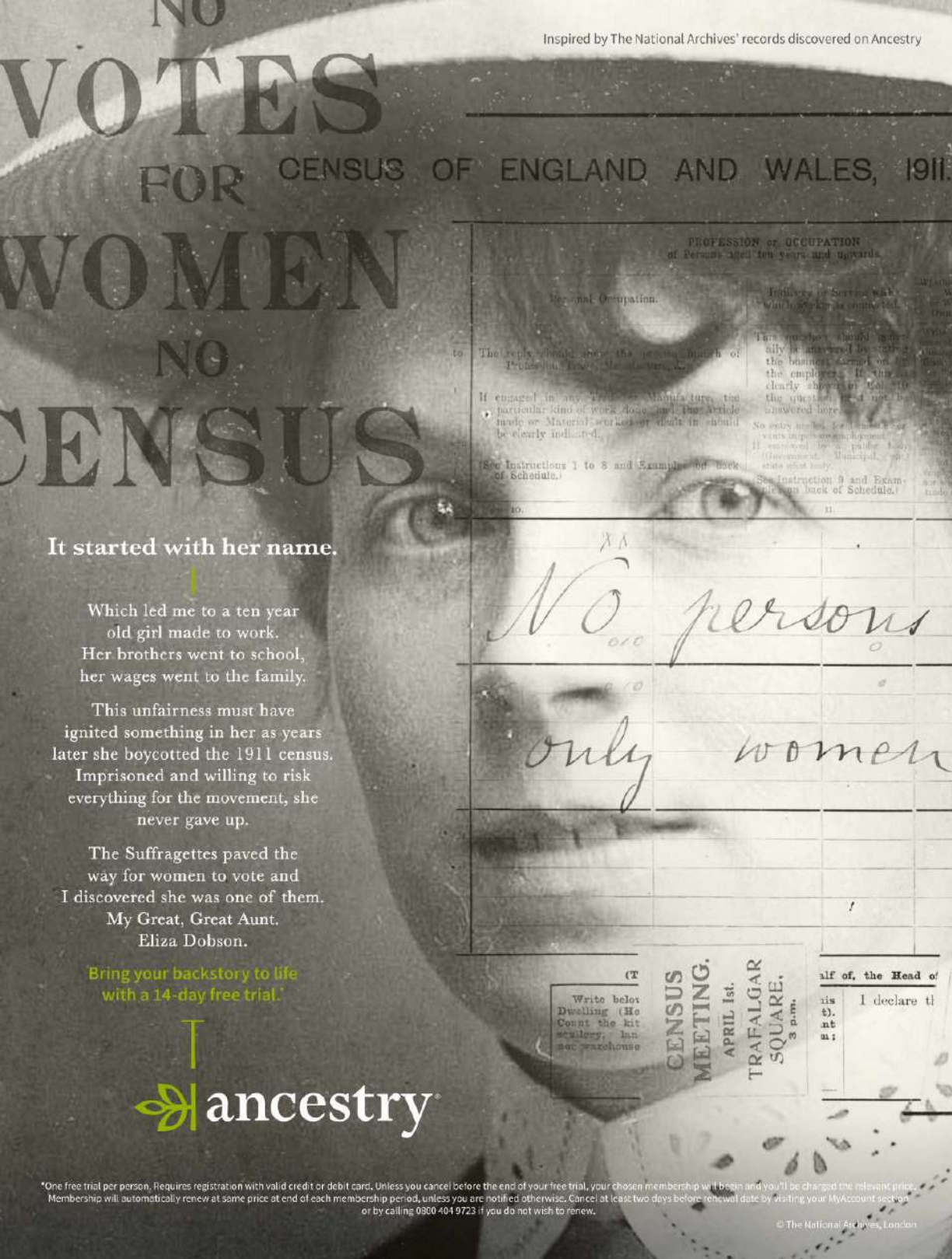
Inspired by The National Archives' records discovered on Ancestry



It started with her name.

Which led me to a ten year old girl made to work. Her brothers went to school, her wages went to the family.

This unfairness must have ignited something in her as years later she boycotted the 1911 census. Imprisoned and willing to risk everything for the movement, she never gave up.

The Suffragettes paved the way for women to vote and I discovered she was one of them. My Great, Great Aunt. Eliza Dobson.

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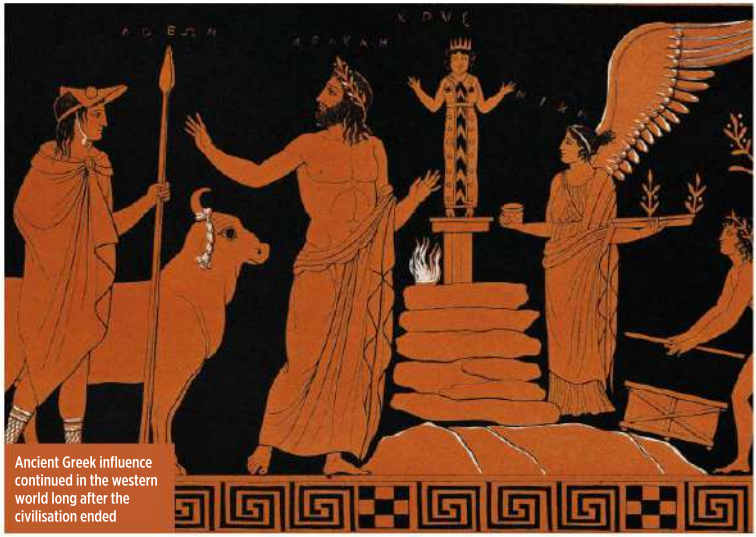
WELCOME SEPTEMBER 2021



Ancient Greek influence continued in the western world long after the civilisation ended

From medicine to warfare, art to philosophy, sport to religion, ancient Greek civilisation dominated the western world for centuries after its end. It's a fascinating period of history, which is why **we've joined forces with renowned classicist Professor Paul Cartledge to explore ancient Greece in more detail**, including the battle of Thermopylae, which was immortalised in the epic 2006 film *300*. Read more from page 28.

Elsewhere, we look back at an intriguing episode from 1953, which saw pioneering physicist John Archibald Wheeler **lose top-secret documents about the first hydrogen bomb** – an event that could have resulted in a Cold War calamity for the US government (*page 61*). We also explore what might have happened **had territorial disputes in East Africa between Britain and France exploded into war in 1898** (*page 70*), and take a closer look at the **rocky marriage of Mary I and Philip of Spain** – a diplomatic union that soon turned disastrous (*page 66*).

This month also sees the 75th anniversary of the **Great Sunday Squat**, when homeless families set up residence in vacant houses across west London as Britain struggled with a post-World War II housing shortage (*page 16*). And, of course, we'll also be investigating some of history's most curious conundrums, including why do people kiss the Blarney Stone? And were Roman soldiers really paid in salt? Find out the answers from page 73.

Have a great month!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

THIS MONTH'S BIG NUMBERS

20,000
The estimated number of Persian soldiers killed in three days at the battle of Thermopylae

38
The age of England's Queen Mary I when she married Philip of Spain in 1554

4,000
The number of child refugees who were brought to Britain during the Spanish Civil War

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ON THE COVER: ALAMY X5, GETTY IMAGES X8, ANDY HAY VIA FLICKR X1. ON THIS PAGE: GETTY IMAGES X1, JENI NOTT X1

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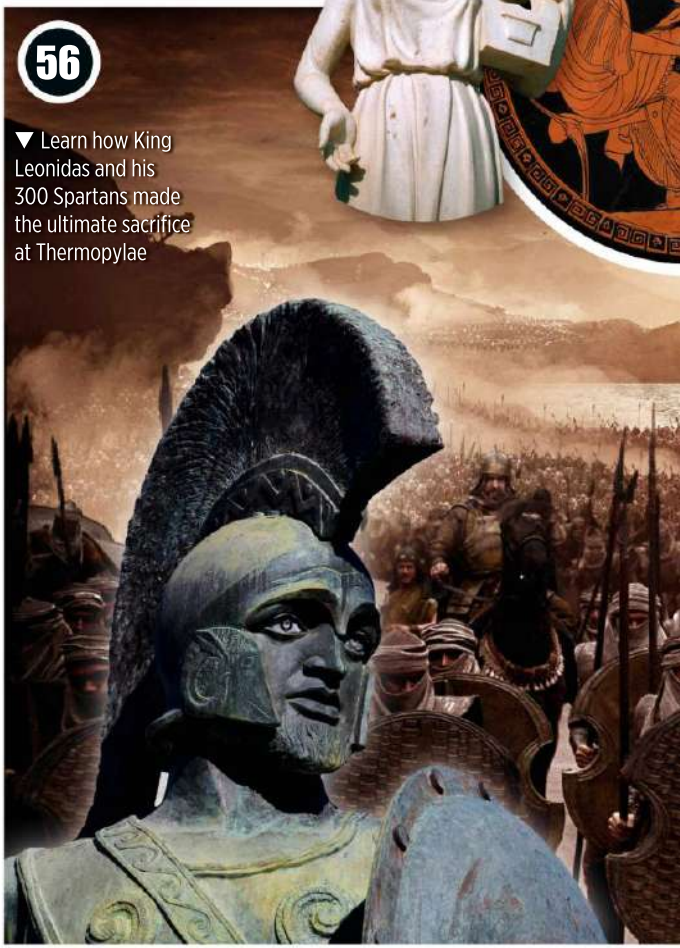

▼ Learn how King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans made the ultimate sacrifice at Thermopylae

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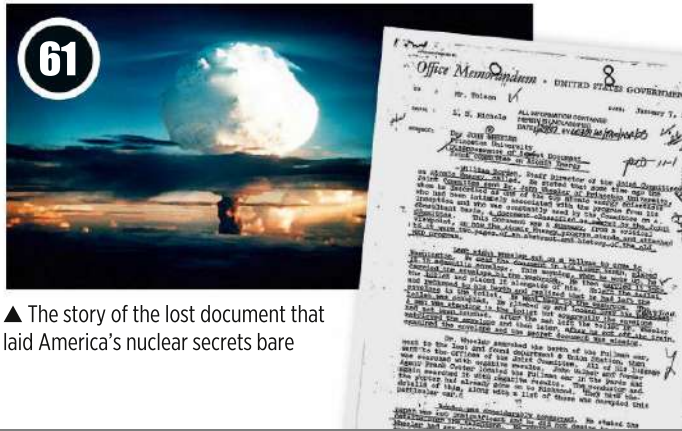
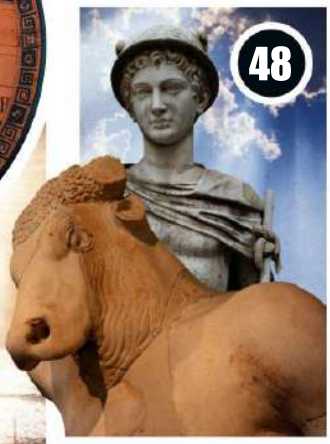


▲ The story of the lost document that laid America's nuclear secrets bare

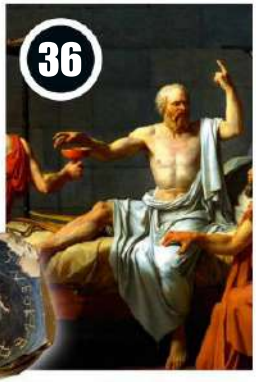
ALAMY X10, BRIDGEMAN X1, GETTY IMAGES X4

◀ Women in Sparta enjoyed greater freedoms than those in other city-states, but ancient Greece was still very much a man's world overall



▲ Meet the deities at the heart of Greek religion

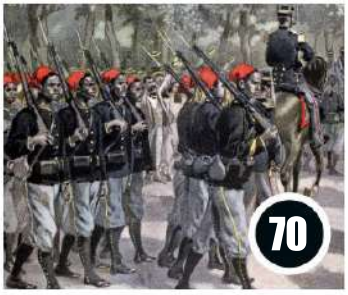
▲ Head-drilling and other Greek medical treatments



▲ Discover how Athens came to be ruled by 'people power'

▲ How many periods of ancient Greece were there?

▲ Why Mary I's union with Philip of Spain ended in heartbreak and tragedy



▲ Inside the tense stand-off that nearly sparked an Anglo-French war in Africa

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SNAPSHOTS

1902
QUITE A STRETCH

Young pupils at a Parisian school for the blind take part in a gymnastics class at the turn of the 20th century. By the time the photograph was taken, Paris had been paving the way in educating the visually impaired for over a hundred years. In 1785, Valentin Haüy founded the city's Institution Royale des Jeunes Aveugles (Royal Institute for Blind Youth), which became the first school for blind children in the world. Among the school's pupils was Louis Braille; it was while studying there that he began developing the dot-based system of reading and writing that still bears his name today.

GETTY IMAGES

木村靴店

SNAPSHOTS

1958
AFTERMATH

Children splash around in a Tokyo street while adults survey the damage caused by Typhoon Alice in late July 1958. The tropical cyclone – one of 21 to hit the Pacific that year – caused large amounts of flooding, destroying homes, crops and ships. Five people in the Japanese capital were killed and 24 were injured. However, in September 1959, the country would experience its deadliest typhoon to date – the Isewan Typhoon, or Typhoon Vera. Fatalities across Japan numbered more than 5,000, with at least a million people made homeless.

GETTY IMAGES

SNAPSHOTS

c1870
ON THE EDGE

A group of tourists stop for a quick photo during a guided trip up Italy's Mount Vesuvius – the infamous volcano that in AD 79 destroyed the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Inspired by the 'Grand Tours' undertaken by young aristocrats in the 17th and 18th centuries, wealthy Victorians also acquired a taste for international travel, making use of new railway routes along the way. Pompeii had only been rediscovered in the mid-1700s, and people were keen to see the ruins – and plaster casts of victims made by Giuseppe Fiorelli in 1863 – though perhaps not all of them from the comfort of a sedan chair!

GETTY IMAGES

THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH...

RECENT HISTORY HEADLINES THAT CAUGHT OUR EYE

EXPEDITION TO SEEK SHACKLETON'S SHIP

A new search is to be launched next year to find the wreck of Sir Ernest Shackleton's lost ship *Endurance*. The vessel – which was crushed by pack ice and sank as the famed explorer attempted to cross Antarctica in 1915 – lies 3,000 metres below the surface of the Weddell Sea, but its precise whereabouts are unknown; Shackleton and his crew survived the expedition but they were left stranded for months. The team behind next year's mission, dubbed Endurance22, is counting on melting ice caused by rising temperatures to aid it in navigating the dangerous waters. A previous attempt to locate the ship in 2019 had to be abandoned due to extreme weather conditions.

GETTY X3, L-P ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND X 2

RARE SARCOPHAGUS DISCOVERED IN BATH

A Roman-era coffin containing two skeletons has been unearthed in a public park in Bath, Somerset. The stone sarcophagus was discovered in the city's Sydney Gardens during landscaping work, along with coloured beads and a pot filled with food remains – possibly a votive offering. Unusually, one of the bodies was found in a prone position, with the other laid at their feet. Laboratory tests are now underway to learn more about the deceased and the lives they may have led, while council officials are also discussing whether the coffin should be put on permanent public display.

LEONARDO BEAR SELLS FOR £8.8M

A drawing of a bear's head by Leonardo da Vinci has sold at auction for a record £8.8m. The tiny artwork is just one of a few pieces by the Renaissance polymath still in private ownership, and is thought to have been drawn in the 1480s alongside a series of other animal subjects. The sale, which was held by Christie's auction house, beats the previous record for a Leonardo drawing – a piece known as *Horse and Rider* previously sold for £8.1m in 2001. The new owner of *Head of a Bear* is unknown, but its former holders include artist Sir Thomas Lawrence who sold it in 1860 for just £2.50.

DEER CARVINGS OFFER NEW CLUES ABOUT PREHISTORIC ART

Prehistoric carvings of animals have been discovered in Scotland for the first time. Found by chance at the Dunchraigaig Cairn burial site in Kilmartin Glen, Argyll, the rock markings – which are thought to be between 4,000 and 5,000 years old – depict several red deer, which were commonly killed for their meat and hides. According to Dr Tertia Barnett (*pictured right*) from Historic Environment Scotland, the discovery "changes the assumption that prehistoric rock art in Britain was mainly geometric and non-figurative".

£3.2m

The auction price recently paid for a rare copy of the US Declaration of Independence, found in a Scottish attic

MEDIEVAL CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCOTLAND?

The effects of medieval climate change are being analysed at a Scottish castle. The present Caerlaverock Castle, near Dumfries, is thought to have been relocated from a site on lower ground, nearer the sea, in the 13th century. Environmental archaeologists are now investigating whether the castle's original location – which is now covered by wetland – became untenable due to marine storms, which eroded the coastline. Although the first castle was built in 1229, its replacement had already been constructed by the time Edward I of England invaded Scotland in 1300.

"There's a real magic in seeing a spontaneous brushstroke that looks like it was painted yesterday, but is actually hundreds of years old"

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES X4

ABOVE: John admires *Saint Agatha* by Carlo Dolci, which is held at Osterley Park and House, west London

LEFT: A 17th-century miniature of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, by Isaac Oliver at Powis Castle

FAR LEFT: A portrait of the Marquis de Champcenetz by renowned English artist Thomas Gainsborough at Knole, Kent

Senior National Curator, Midlands (Pictures and Sculpture) at the National Trust

Dr John Chu

HOW DID YOU BECOME A CURATOR?
I realised quite early on that I wanted to be a curator, so I worked steadily towards it. Volunteering in museums and postgraduate studies were really important steps on the way. It's been hard work but, at the same time, it's always felt like natural progression.

Even as a kid I gravitated towards the visual arts and enjoyed sharing my pleasure and interest in them. I could spend hours in Manchester City Art Gallery. That's probably what's behind it all.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE PICTURES AND SCULPTURE AS YOUR SPECIALITY?
I can't remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by pictures and sculpture. I've always appreciated art's ability to create a space for reflection, and a sense of connection to an ever-expanding range of ideas and cultures.

As time has gone on, I've also grown to value the intellectual challenges of understanding the original meaning of artworks. Along with music and literature, for me, the visual arts create the most intimate and emotional experience you can have with people of far-distant times and places.

To give a simple example, there's a real magic in seeing a spontaneous brushstroke that looks like it was painted yesterday, but is actually hundreds of years old. It makes the past – but also the present moment – feel so alive.

WHAT DOES AN AVERAGE DAY AT WORK LOOK LIKE FOR YOU?
With over 13,500 oil paintings in National Trust collections across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, not to mention all our sculpture, prints and drawings, there's a lot to keep me busy. At any given time, I might be giving a public talk on a painting, valuing a statue, making conservation decisions or initiating a research project.

This year has been especially exciting. In September we're publishing a book illustrating 100 of the National Trust's best paintings – from medieval times to the 20th century. It was really hard work to arrive at the final selection – we could have included at least four times as many in the book.

The idea that historic houses are unchanging is a common misconception, says curator Dr John Chu

DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVOURITE PAINTINGS OR SCULPTURES YOU CAN TALK ABOUT?
The paintings that are closest to my heart are often the ones that I have had a hand in acquiring. There might be a perception out there that historic houses and their contents are unchanged and unchanging. Part of my job is to identify artworks that left sites before they came under the care of the National Trust. It's up to me to make the case for bringing them back.

Early into my time at the National Trust, we fundraised to secure a beautiful portrait by Thomas Gainsborough for Knole in Kent. It depicts the Marquis de Champcenetz, a French aristocrat who fled to England during the French Revolution and found refuge at the house. I love the sensitivity of the likeness, but also the resonance of its story of homes lost and found.

These acquisitions provide permanent public access to fantastic works of art – which is great in itself – but they also provide a new perspective on National Trust sites. I was lucky enough to curate exhibitions at Osterley Park in west London and Powis Castle in Powys, to celebrate the purchases of Carlo Dolci's *Saint Agatha* and Isaac Oliver's superb miniature of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. We redisplayed whole sections of each house around these acquisitions. You get really intimately acquainted with works of art through that process.

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ARTWORK FROM THE PAST IS STILL RELEVANT TODAY?
The art of the past resonates in so many ways with people's present-day experience. Among the pictures cared for by National Trust, there really is something for everyone to connect with. Many people find solace in the beauty and creativity they find in works of artists like Rembrandt, JMW Turner and Barbara Hepworth. Others might be intrigued by the parallels between a historical portrait sitter like Lord Herbert, brazenly promoting his looks and courtly talents, and a contemporary social media influencer manipulating their online image.

Then there's the emotional and spiritual potential of art. Dolci, for example, shows the martyr Saint Agatha in the midst of her torture by the Romans. The picture invites us to contemplate the cruelties of religious persecution and empathise with the suffering of one willing to stand against it. It's hard to imagine anything more profound.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ASPIRING CURATORS?
Be tenacious, but remain open to new ideas and be curious about different points of view. There's no substitute for scholarship and deep knowledge – so work hard on that – but bear in mind that it won't count for much if you can't make your subject meaningful for others.

DR JOHN CHU is Senior National Curator, Midlands (Pictures and Sculpture) at the National Trust and co-author of the forthcoming book *100 Paintings from the Collections of the National Trust*, on sale from 2 September. Find out more at *nationaltrust.org.uk/shop*

Squatters take over west London

Words: Emma Slattery Williams

On 8 September 1946, property owners across England's capital were in a state of panic as around 1,500 squatters descended on empty buildings across west London. It was the culmination of a year's worth of squatting by families desperate for a home in postwar Britain.

After the end of World War II, the British housing market was in crisis. The war had halted the construction of new houses and thousands of homes and businesses had been damaged or destroyed beyond repair in the bombing raids of the Blitz. Many families still lived in cramped slums, far outdated for the modern age in which they were living. Families were moving to new areas for work, such as the steelworks in Scunthorpe, to find there was nowhere for them to live. A boom in births, plus the return of men and women from the armed forces, saw a need for housing like never before.

If you were lucky, you may have been given a prefab to accommodate your family after being bombed out of your home. These were bungalows made of prefabricated parts that could be constructed easily, without the need for skilled builders. For many, they were a revelation, offering an inside toilet for the first time, but prefabs were never meant to be permanent and there weren't enough for everyone; some people had to move in with family and friends. But for others, empty military buildings left behind after the war offered an alternative solution.

Squatters demand water and bedding after setting up residence in Abbey Lodge, London

ABOVE: **A woman uses a modern gas stove in the Holland Park home her family is occupying**

ABOVE RIGHT: **Prefabs were easy to put up, as demonstrated by these Watford schoolchildren**

While the building of houses may have slowed down during World War II, military camps, air bases and barracks had sprung up in their hundreds. After the war, many local governments had requested that these buildings be transferred over to housing, but the request was denied and the huts remained empty until vigilante groups stepped in.

NON-HOSTILE TAKEOVER

During the summer of 1946, thousands of families squatted – that is, occupied without permission – in abandoned and disused military camps across the country. The year before, empty properties in south coast towns had been occupied by former servicemen, but in 1946 the squatting movement went one step further. One of the first sites to witness an influx of homeless families was Vache Park in Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire. Ex-commando John Mann, who was sharing a cottage with his family as well as 10 strangers overheard the news in August 1946 that a nearby deserted army camp was being prepared to hold Polish ex-servicemen. By the next day, 120 British families had moved into the spacious huts after a group of veterans managed to successfully seize the camp.

Local authorities relented and, with public approval, the families enjoyed their newfound space. Violet Bree was one of those who moved into a hut at Vache Park and was thrilled at the

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2

Some families who squatted in London's flats still had to share, but it gave them a roof over their heads

ABOVE: **A boy points out where his bedroom used to be after the destruction of his house during a German bombing raid**

TOP RIGHT: **MPs inspect new council houses being built in Bethnal Green in London's East End, July 1946**

"Is it not wonderful? So much space! We used to live in one room with my mother-in-law – I was terrified of her"

prospect, telling *TIME* magazine: "Is it not wonderful? So much space! We used to live in one room with my mother-in-law – I was terrified of her. They say it will be 10 years before we get a house, but I do not mind if we can stay here. There is another room behind there (they are going to knock a door through) with a telephone. I never had a telephone before."

Military camp occupation was very appealing for veterans and others who had lost their homes. For men and women who had survived the horrors of war, it wasn't much for them to expect somewhere decent to live.

Many of the homes that families were forced to share, or had been bombed out of, were a far cry from the comfortable and high-quality military accommodation, although not all military camps were of the same standard. Some would leak and lacked sewerage, electricity and even water. But for many families, this was still preferable if it meant they had their own space and didn't have to live with strangers.

CHANGING TACTICS

The Labour government, which had come to power in 1945, had promised to build new homes as part of its election campaign. But it did not want to be seen to be reacting too harshly towards the squatters, and for a few months seemed to take no action. By 19 August 1946, the Ministry of Health had reportedly announced that where military camps were suitable for housing, local authorities would take them over for this purpose, but where this was not possible evictions would be necessary.

Much of the British public sympathised with the plight of the squatters. If government buildings were empty and the government wasn't providing adequate housing, then there should be no problem with people living there. The media used the squatting movement as an extension of the 'Blitz Spirit', reporting that people were simply making the best out of a bad situation. Many squatters were happy to pay rent – they didn't want a home for nothing, and committees were set up to collect money.

On 17 August 1946, Clementine Churchill, wife of former prime minister Winston Churchill, officially unveiled the first council houses to be built since the war in Woodford, Essex, and used the event as an opportunity to throw her support behind families who were 'squatting': "These people are referred to by the ungraceful term 'squatters', and I wish the press would not use this word about respectable citizens whose only desire is to have a home."

Before long, the government had created committees for the occupied camps; if the sites were needed for other uses, eviction proceedings were started, but otherwise local councils would provide water, electricity and collect rent. Since these families were no longer on their council housing waiting lists, those in local government were usually more than happy to oblige.

Keen to capitalise on the situation, Britain's Communist Party accelerated the squatting movement, and organised a mass squat of privately owned empty properties in west London. On 8 September 1946, in what became known as the Great Sunday Squat, around 1,500 people moved into vacant houses, flats and hotels across Kensington, St John's Wood and Pimlico. Groups such as the Women's Royal Voluntary Service supplied the squatters with camp beds, stoves and food. ▶

THIS MONTH... 1946

ANNIVERSARIES THAT HAVE MADE HISTORY

ABOVE: **Labour MP and health minister Aneurin Bevan. It was his 1949 Housing Act that opened up council housing to all**

TOP LEFT: **Squatters at the Duchess of Bedford House flats serve hot meals to each other**

◀ One of the places taken over were the luxury flats at the Duchess of Bedford House in Kensington, which had been used during the war by the Ministry of Works. The Ministry had suggested the apartments be used for housing the homeless, while the Borough Council wanted them to return to high-rent flats.

Now that private properties rather than government buildings were being targeted, the press began to turn against the squatters, reversing much of the public's former goodwill. The government also came down harder, and took steps to end the squatting. Police set up blockades around the squats and tried to prevent food and other amenities from reaching them, as well as attempting to stop anyone from returning after going to work. The squatters came up with ingenious ways to get around this, though; men would use the rooftops to get out to work and pulley systems were used to move food between houses.

Eventually, the electricity and water for the buildings were turned off, and after 12 days, the squatters were evicted. The ringleaders were arrested and charged with incitement to trespass, but sympathetic judges simply suspended their sentences in return for their good behaviour.

The men and women of the Great Sunday Squat were rehomed, but many of those residing in military camps remained there well into the 1950s. On 10 October 1946, in a report to the House of Commons, then Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan confirmed that 39,535 people were occupying 1,038 camps in England and Wales.

House building in Britain soon rose dramatically. In 1946 around 23,000 houses were built and by 1948 this figure had climbed to more than 190,000.

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4 A BBC Radio 4 series, *Streets Apart: A History of Social Housing*, is available to stream now: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b092sx21*

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

A LOOK BACK AT THREE OTHER EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SEPTEMBER THROUGHOUT HISTORY

19 September 1356

FRANCE SUFFERS A CRUSHING DEFEAT

The English win a major victory over France at the battle of Poitiers. This ends the first phase of the Hundred Years' War and King John II of France becomes an English prisoner for four years.

3 September 1783

THE UNITED STATES GETS ITS RECOGNITION

US sovereignty is finally recognised by Great Britain, seven years after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. The Treaty of Paris officially ends the American Revolutionary War and Britain surrenders most of its land east of the Mississippi River to the United States.

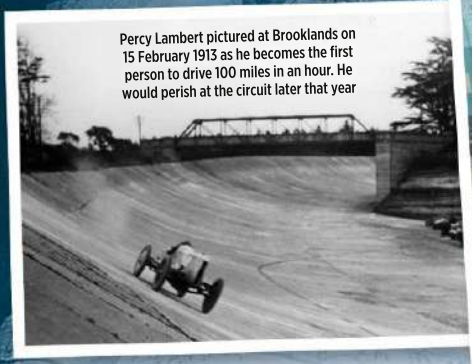
2 September 1945

PEACE IS RESTORED

The surrender of Japan sees World War II finally come to an end, six years and one day after it started. Europe has already celebrated Germany's surrender earlier in the year, but it is on board the USS *Missouri* that representatives of Japan sign the Instrument of Surrender, ending hostilities with the Allies. In a few isolated Pacific islands, some Japanese soldiers continue fighting, refusing to believe that Emperor Hirohito would concede defeat.

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X1

BBC Radio's **Danny Robins** travels to the former Brooklands racing circuit in Surrey to follow up sightings of a particularly speedy spook



Percy Lambert pictured at Brooklands on 15 February 1913 as he becomes the first person to drive 100 miles in an hour. He would perish at the circuit later that year

ABOVE: Racing writer Mark Richardson tells Danny and the *Haunted* podcast team about his 'encounter' with Percy

LEFT: Percy's driving uniform remains on display at Brooklands Museum

I'm perched on the almost impossibly steep bend of the world's oldest racetrack, contemplating the existence of the world's fastest ghost. Brooklands, near Weybridge in leafy Surrey, is now a rather fun museum full of old cars and planes, but it was once the first-ever purpose-built motor-racing course. I'm with Mark Richardson, a tall, bespectacled writer and motorsports fan who's been coming here since he was a kid. Mark very definitely doesn't believe in ghosts, and yet, he thinks he saw one, right on this very spot.

To understand, we need to imagine the cracked and weed-strewn track back in its heyday, on 31 October 1913, as British racing driver Percy 'Pearly' Lambert revved his engine and prepared to break the land speed record. Only a few months earlier, Percy had become a legend in his own lifetime; the first person to drive 100 miles in an hour. This was still the age of the horse, so his achievement was like landing on the Moon. Cruelly though, his record was snatched away almost immediately by a French rival, so, now here Percy is, trying to reclaim it, just two weeks before he's due to get married.

"He'd promised his fiancée this was going to be his last day of racing," says Mark.

"Oh God," I gasp, "and it was..."

You see, Percy's words became eerily prophetic as, on the 21st lap, his rear tyre burst. In those days, drivers sat on the car, like jockeys on horseback, with no safety belt or helmet to protect them. Poor Percy didn't stand a chance as the puncture sent his speeding car somersaulting, fracturing his skull. He died on the way to hospital and that was the end of his high-speed hopes. Or was it... ?

There have been many sightings of Percy at Brooklands since – a sad-looking figure walking around the track, perhaps mourning his failure or the fiancée he'd never get to marry. Mark's sighting came at 5.30am one misty morning when he's pretty certain he was the only (living) person here.

For me, the most convincing part of Mark's story is his reluctance to tell it. Brooklands Museum tends to attract car enthusiasts – rational types like Mark. No one is impressed by ghost stories here, and yet, year after year, there are fresh sightings of Percy. He's not the only apparition either. During 28 years of racing, until the track closed in 1939, 17 people died; not just drivers but spectators too, and, by all accounts, quite a few of them have chosen to linger.

As we walk round the death-defying concrete curve, Mark tells me of a visitor who saw the ghost of a decapitated driver and was so shaken by the experience that museum staff ended up having to call an ambulance. I feel a shiver, despite the autumn sun, as I realise this is a place of death; the early-20th century equivalent of a gladiatorial arena, where crowds lined the track to watch young drivers risk their lives in flimsy cars at breakneck speeds.

If phantom soldiers re-enact their final moments on battlefields, it seems equally appropriate that Percy and his adrenaline-junkie contemporaries return to haunt Brooklands. But perhaps he's not trudging round the track mournfully, he's just concentrating, getting ready for another attempt at that record...

DANNY ROBINS is a writer, broadcaster and journalist and creator of BBC Radio 4's *The Battersea Poltergeist*. Listen at *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0940193*

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Danny Robins' trip to Brooklands Museum appears in episode 3 of his *Haunted* podcast – *The 100mph Ghost* – available on all major podcast platforms

GETTY IMAGES X2, WILLIE RUNTE X1, DANNY ROBINS X2

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The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Words: Jonny Wilkes

WHAT HAVE THE ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS BEEN FIGHTING ABOUT?

The ongoing conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs is over their claims to the same land. The area – in the Middle East on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea – is split, with part making up the state of Israel and part being two Palestinian territories, the West Bank and Gaza.

Both peoples have a profound sense of entitlement to the land, at the heart of which is the city of Jerusalem (known as al-Quds in Arabic), home to some of the holiest sites in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. For decades, they have fought wars and lived uneasily with the threat of the other side. Palestinians argue they are oppressed by Israeli occupation and have been denied their own independent state, while Israelis insist the area is their homeland and their nation has a right to exist.

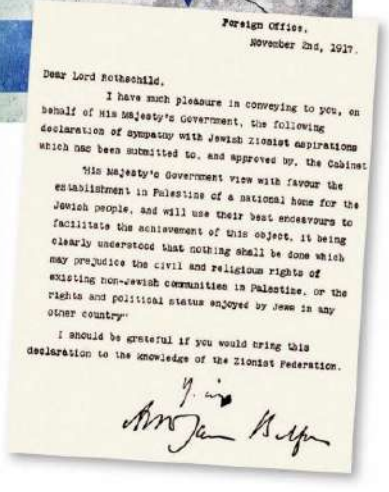
It must be said, though: that is an oversimplification of a hugely complex conflict, which still rages on as every attempt at peace negotiation fails.

WHAT SPARKED THE CONFLICT?

The attachment to the land for Jews and Arabs had been established over millennia, but the conflict ignited in the late 19th century with the rise of Zionism in Europe, a nationalistic ideology calling for a Jewish homeland. The idea caught on with some Jewish people who, having been persecuted throughout history, were instilled with a deep desire for a place where they could feel safe. That should be, many believed, in Palestine due to their ancient settlement there, and, more importantly, the promise of a homeland made by God to Abraham.

The 1880s saw the first waves of immigration, called *Aliyah* (ascent), before Zionism became a powerful movement with the publication, in 1896, of the pamphlet *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State) by Austro-Hungarian intellectual Theodor Herzl. He then convened and chaired the First Zionist Congress the following year, committing to building a Jewish state in Palestine.

At its most basic level, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is grounded in a dispute over land that has deep religious and historical significance for both sides



Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

> "Jewish populations were instilled with a deep desire for a place where they could feel safe"

The region was in the Ottoman empire and had a Muslim majority, so tensions rose immediately as early Jewish arrivals bought up land. Then, during World War I, when Britain looked set to seize the region from the Ottomans, it made several contradictory agreements over what should happen, both supporting calls for an independent Arab state and issuing the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Named after British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour, the latter expressed "favour" for a "national home for the Jewish people" as long as it would not "prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities".

This became a core value of British-held Mandate Palestine and encouraged hundreds of thousands of Jews to move there between the 1920s and 1940s.

ABOVE LEFT: **Around 35,000 Jews settled in Ottoman Palestine between 1883–1903**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The Balfour Declaration of 1917 expressed Britain's support for a new Jewish state**

GETTY IMAGES X3

The Arabs who had lived on the land for centuries strongly opposed what they saw as British colonialism and a European invasion. Violence regularly broke out between the Arab, Jewish and British sides, including an Arab revolt in 1929 and a three-year Arab uprising in 1936.

WHEN DID ISRAEL BECOME A STATE?

Jews had been heading to Palestine to escape persecution in Europe prior to World War II, but in the aftermath of that conflict, international shock at the atrocities of the Holocaust (or *Shoah* in Hebrew) amplified calls for a Jewish state.

The United Nations voted in November 1947 to split Mandate Palestine in two, with Jerusalem becoming an international city; an idea accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by Arabs on the grounds that the UN had no right to carve up their homeland. A brutal civil war thus erupted between Mandate Palestine's Arab and Jewish communities, with hundreds of thousands of Arab refugees forced to flee. The British already faced fierce opposition from both sides – including a bombing by a rightwing Jewish group of their headquarters, the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which killed almost 100 people – so chose to withdraw entirely.

So on 14 May 1948, the state of Israel was created, with war breaking out against neighbouring Arab countries the very next day. By the time a ceasefire agreement had been reached in 1949, Israel had gained control over most of the region, except for Jordan occupying what became the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and Egypt holding Gaza.

WHAT WAS THE NAKBA?

The war in 1948 forced up to 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and made them refugees, resulting in a fracturing of Palestinian society now remembered as the *Nakba* (catastrophe). It remains a central obstacle in any peace talks as there are now five million descendants across Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza – a third of them in refugee camps. Israel says the Palestinians chose to leave and cannot be allowed to return, while the Palestinians regard the *Nakba* as part of an ethnic cleansing that must be put right if any agreement is to be reached.

WHAT IS THE ISRAELI POSITION IN THE CONFLICT?

Israel has historically been surrounded by hostile Arab neighbours, and border tensions have often spilled over into wars and invasions. On 5 June 1967, claiming that they were pre-empting an attack, Israel launched airstrikes on Egypt, beginning what became known as the Six-Day War. By 10 June, they were victorious, decimating the Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian militaries, and gaining control over the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (Israel would go on to settle its border disputes with Egypt and Jordan through respective peace treaties in 1979 and 1994.)

Since 1967, Israel has built hundreds of settlements in the occupied West Bank. They are illegal in the eyes of the international community and a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, but Israel rejects that and has not stopped its building programme to the present day. There are now around half a million settlers who choose to live in the West Bank out of religious or nationalistic fervour, or to take advantage of the cheap and subsidised housing. The settlements have split Palestinian communities, chipped away at their link to the land, and made any peace talks about the future of the West Bank significantly more difficult.

More than 700,000 Arabs fled Palestine during the 1947–49 civil war. The fracturing of Palestinian society during this time is commonly referred to as the *Nakba*

David Ben-Gurion declares the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, becoming its first prime minister in the process

The 1946 bombing of Jerusalem's King David Hotel hastened Britain's withdrawal from Mandate Palestine

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2

The city of Jerusalem remains a holy site for all three major Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Islam and Christianity

A Palestinian child passes rubble on their way home from a United Nations-run school in Gaza, 2009

US President Bill Clinton oversees a symbolic handshake between Israel's Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat in 1993

"Each attempt at making peace has collapsed as Palestinians and Israelis fail to agree on the major issues"

DOES ISRAEL STILL CONTROL ALL OF JERUSALEM?

At the heart of the conflict is Jerusalem. The city had been split in two between Israel and Jordan until 1967, but has since been under Israeli control and declared as their undivided capital. Almost no other country recognises this status, choosing instead to house their embassies in Tel Aviv. Of particular significance is the Old City, home to the Temple Mount (known as al-Haram al-Sharif in Arabic) and holy sites for the three major Abrahamic religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The Palestinians wish to claim East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

WHAT IS THE PALESTINIAN POSITION IN THE CONFLICT?

The Palestinians wish to establish an independent state of their own, but have witnessed their two territories dwindle and suffer under Israeli occupation or blockade since 1967. Factors such as superior Israeli weaponry also means that the Palestinian death toll in the conflict far outweighs that of Israel's.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formed in 1964 – its commitment to armed revolution and the acts it carried out saw it labelled as a "terrorist group" by the governments of several countries. Led for 35 years by Yasser Arafat, the PLO also sought diplomatic relations and secured its place as the national representative of the Palestinians. Although Arafat died in 2004, his Fatah party continues to run the Palestinian Authority that nominally governs disjointed areas of the West Bank.

Gaza is ruled by another organisation, the Islamist militant group Hamas, which took over the area in 2007 (the result of a violent struggle against Fatah, with whom Hamas had formed a short-lived national unity government earlier that year). Founded in 1987 with the explicit intention of utterly destroying Israel, Hamas has fought against Israel for decades using suicide bombings, rocket attacks and mortar strikes. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but still controls its borders, so severely restricts what goes in and out to prevent weapons getting to Hamas. As Gaza is effectively under military blockade, aid and medicines have also been restricted, meaning that living conditions have become increasingly dire.

In 1987, mass demonstrations, strikes and boycotts in Gaza escalated into wider civil unrest, known as the first *intifada* (literally, 'shaking off'). This extended to the West Bank and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Israelis, although retaliatory actions killed around 1,400 Palestinians. A second *intifada* broke out in 2000 and proved far bloodier, lasting five years and ending with about 3,000 Palestinian and 1,000 Israeli deaths.

HAS THERE BEEN PROGRESS IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, AND WHAT ROLE HAS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAD?

The United States has brokered a number of peace talks over the past few decades, including the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1978. During the Oslo Accords of 1993 (facilitated by the Norwegian government), Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Arafat ended up shaking hands on the White House lawn.

However, each attempt at making peace has collapsed as Palestinians and Israelis fail to agree on the major issues: the creation of a Palestinian state; the Jewish settlements in the West Bank; Jerusalem; and the fate of the refugees.

WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR A LASTING PEACE?

UN Security Council Resolution 242, adopted in 1967 in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, continues to be the basis for negotiations; the most common approach is the two-state solution, where Palestine and Israel would separate entirely and become two independent states. The alternative is a one-state solution, which would mean both peoples would live in one country, where Arabs would greatly outnumber Jews.

Hopes for any kind of peace seem diminished and it is hard to ignore that something has to change for progress to be possible. Fighting breaks out often, most recently in 2021, and both sides struggle with internal divisions. Even if talks were held, peace would rely on Israel and Palestinians being willing to compromise over issues that are deeply entrenched in their identities and attachment to the land.

With thanks to Dr Martin Bunton of the University of Victoria for his expert advice

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The 10-part BBC World Service drama, *Miriam and Youssef*, tells the story of the founding of Israel: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/w13xtv38*

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories

The Austrian neurologist shocked the medical community with his radical psychological ideas. But, asks **Nige Tassell**, did his focus on sexuality tinge the way we ultimately remember him today?

As one of the foremost European thinkers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud is considered the father of psychoanalysis: a pioneering treatment for psychopathology (the study of mental disorders) that required a dialogue between the physician and the patient, rather than mere observation.

As a man of Jewish heritage, Freud's theories were particularly abhorrent to the Nazis. They apparently ran contrary to the Nazi mindset of discipline and order, and Freud's books were burned in Berlin. When Hitler annexed Austria in 1938, Freud was forced to flee Vienna in fear of his life. By then 82 years of age, he and his family only reached the safe haven of London thanks to the financial patronage of fellow psychoanalyst Princess Marie Bonaparte, and to his work permit being expedited.

PLUMBING NEW DEPTHS

Born in 1856 in Freiberg (now Příbor in the Czech Republic), Freud spent most of his life in Vienna, where he qualified as a doctor of medicine in 1881. Five years later, he married Martha Bernays – the granddaughter of a chief rabbi – and the pair had six children, the youngest of whom, Anna, would follow in his footsteps and become known as the founder of psychoanalytic child psychology.

In 1886, following a stint in Paris with renowned neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, Freud set up his own private practice in Vienna where he would eventually abandon the use of hypnosis as a treatment in favour of his own, new clinical methods. A great deal of his subsequent studies involved a person's unconscious, which, he believed, was the true measure of sexual and violent feelings. "Unexpressed emotions will never die," he wrote. "They are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways."

Freud's father died in 1896, releasing emotions that he understood to have been long-repressed – emotions that had their origins in his earliest familial experiences. Accordingly, Freud embarked on an intensive programme of self-analysis, largely through the study and interpretation of his dreams. Dream analysis wasn't a new, or even unconventional, approach, but Freud imbued the whole process with greater significance, believing that dreams represented wish fulfilment. "The interpretation of dreams," he wrote, "is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind." His controversial findings were published in 1900 as *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Sigmund Freud arrives in Paris in 1938 with his daughter, Anna, having fled the Nazi occupation of their native Austria

Freud's biographer Peter Gay has neatly articulated the bewilderment, and probable shock, that the established medical profession experienced when they were originally exposed to Freudian thinking. He argues: "While the implications of Darwin's views were threatening and unsettling, they were not quite so directly abrasive, not quite so unrespectable as Freud's views on infantile sexuality, the ubiquity of perversions, and the dynamic power of unconscious urges."

FATHER FIGURE

In 1910, Freud founded the International Psychoanalytical Association, with Carl Jung elected as its first president. The pair exchanged ideas and collaborated together; Freud saw the younger man as the inheritor of the psychoanalytical thought he'd established. But Jung's own thinking didn't fit the rigidity of Freud's theories: he didn't place so much emphasis on sexuality as a driver and measure of a person's growth and development. A schism developed between the two men – one that would remain throughout their lifetimes.

Freud published another highly influential paper in 1923, *The Ego and the Id*, which focused on the nature of the conscious and unconscious, with Freud dividing the human mind into three. The super-ego, he believed, is the moral conscience, while the Id represents instinct. The ego, meanwhile, mediates between the two, continually trying to strike a crucial balance between impulse and repression.

Age did not wilt Freud's curiosity. Right up until his death in London in 1939 (suffering great pain from cancer of the jaw, he instructed his doctor to administer fatal doses of morphine), Freud was working on *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, which was published unfinished the following year.

While the influence of psychoanalysis has waned since his death, Freud's theories have very much permeated western thought and culture. However, Freud himself has become something of a caricature, with the sexual elements of his thinking often overpowering his character. In EL Doctorow's novel *Ragtime*, for instance, Freud is presented as a "sexologist, an exponent of free love who used big words to talk about dirty things". Elsewhere, the American designer Raymond Loewy ruminated: "Every time I see a photograph of Freud, I wonder how a man who spent his whole life in a tête-à-tête with sex can look that gloomy..."

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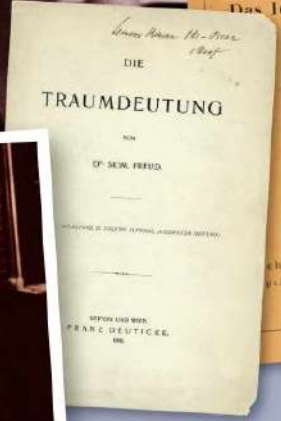
Freud at work in his office. Many of the neurologist's theories remain controversial, more than 80 years after his death

"Freud has become something of a caricature, with the sexual elements of his thinking often overpowering his character"



RIGHT: Freud (*seated far left*) pictured with fellow proponents of psychoanalysis at a conference in the United States, 1909. His Swiss protégé and future rival, Carl Jung, is seated far right

FAR RIGHT: *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923) both presented new ideas about the unconscious mind

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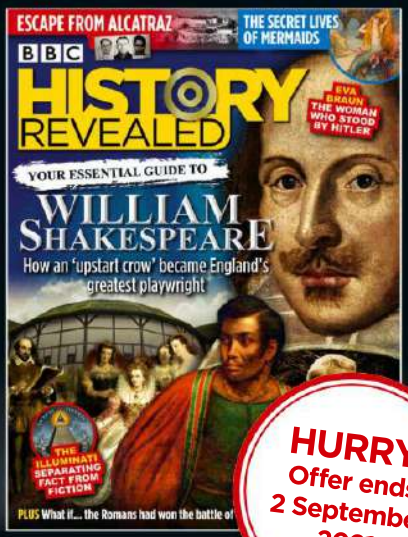
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YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO ANCIENT GREECE

Few civilisations have made an impact on history quite like ancient Greece. Emerging out of a so-called 'Dark Ages' roughly three millennia ago, Greece's powerful city-states would come to dominate the western world for centuries to come, making huge contributions towards the fields of science, philosophy, literature, medicine and art. Indeed, some of ancient Greece's greatest intellectuals and thinkers – from Archimedes to Aristotle – are still lauded today, while tales from Greek mythology continue to capture the popular imagination.

In this month's essential guide, we'll be taking readers on a tour through Athens, Sparta, Corinth and beyond, looking at the story of ancient Greek civilisation across more than eight centuries. Accompanied on our journey by renowned classicist and expert Professor Paul Cartledge, we'll also examine Greece's role in the birth of democracy, the creation of the original Olympic Games, and the impact of war, religion and slavery on people's everyday lives.

We begin on the next page, however, with an overview of some the most important milestones of the period...

30 Milestones in ancient Greek history
An overview of the key events that shaped the civilisation's existence

32 Everything you wanted to know about ancient Greece
Professor Paul Cartledge answers our questions on everyday Greek life

36 The birth of democracy
How an ancient Athenian political model would go on to inspire future societies

38 Women's lives
Find out what it meant to be a woman in Athens, Sparta and further afield

40 14 influential ancient Greeks
From Socrates to Sophocles, meet the figures whose names still loom large today

43 Warfare
Inside the fearsome weaponry and battle tactics used by warring city-states

46 Sport and leisure
How did the Greeks spend their free time, and how did the Olympics begin?

48 Religion
Discover the huge cast of deities worshipped by the ancient Greeks

51 Art and sculpture
Learn how Greek visual arts evolved over the centuries

52 Slavery
Inside the brutal treatment meted out on enslaved men, women and children

54 Medicine and healthcare
Find out why Hippocrates would influence physicians for centuries to come

56 The battle of Thermopylae
An account of the clash that saw the heroics of 300 Spartans go down in legend

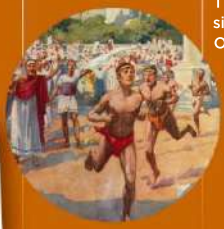
PAUL CARTLEDGE
is Emeritus AG Leventis Professor of Greek Culture and AG Leventis Senior Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge. His books include *Thebes: The Forgotten City of Ancient Greece*, which is now available in paperback (Picador, 2021)

KEY MILESTONES IN ANCIENT GREEK HISTORY

c800 BC

▼ Greece starts to emerge from its so-called 'Dark Ages' following the collapse of the Mycenaean civilisation. City-states known as *poleis* begin to form on the Greek mainland, eventually expanding around the Aegean.

776 BC



▲ The first Olympic Games are held in honour of Zeus at Olympia.

c750 BC

The Greeks set their sights further afield. One of their earliest western colonies is Pithekoussai in the Bay of Naples, with further settlements arising in the Mediterranean and North Africa. Around this time, the poet Homer writes *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

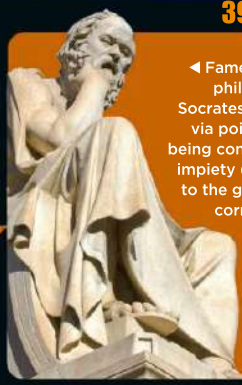
743–724 BC

The First Messenian War is fought between the Greek city-states of Sparta and Messene. The latter is defeated and becomes annexed by Sparta, with most of its citizens reduced to slaves.

660–650 BC

The Second Messenian War begins as a slave revolt by the Messenians against their Spartan overlords. However, the uprising fails, and the Spartans remain in control. Meanwhile, the city-states of Athens, Sparta and Corinth continue to grow in power.

399 BC



◄ Famed Athenian philosopher Socrates is executed via poison after being condemned for impiety (irreverence to the gods) and for corrupting the youth of the city.

430 BC

▲ A quarter of the population of Athens is killed due to an outbreak of plague, including its leader, Pericles (*pictured*).

431–404 BC

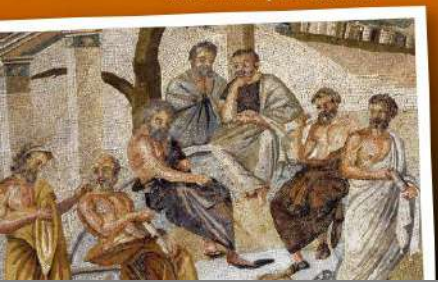
▼ The Second Peloponnesian War sees the Spartans emerge as the victors.

447 BC

▲ Construction begins on the Parthenon, a temple to the goddess Athena, on the Athenian acropolis.

387 BC

▼ Philosopher Plato establishes his academy in Athens, considered the earliest university in the world, where philosophy, mathematics, science and statesmanship are studied.



371 BC

▲ Thebes ends Spartan dominance and becomes the leading military power in Greece after securing victory at the battle of Leuctra.

338 BC

Philip II of Macedonia defeats Athens and Thebes. He establishes the League of Corinth, or the Hellenic League, an offensive and defensive alliance, which unites all of the Greek city-states (except Sparta) under his rule.

336 BC

Alexander the Great becomes king of Macedonia (today this area includes North Macedonia as well as parts of Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia and Kosovo), and later conquers Egypt, making its new capital Alexandria. He goes on to defeat the Persian empire in 330 BC.

323 BC

► Alexander the Great dies, and ancient Greece enters an era now commonly known as the Hellenistic period.

GETTY IMAGES X8, ALAMY X7

Ancient Greek civilisation spanned more than eight centuries, encompassing countless conquests, discoveries and battles – here are some of the most significant events

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

c621 BC

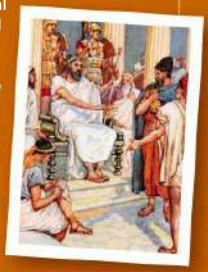
◀ A new body of laws is introduced in Athens, allegedly by an aristocrat and legislator called Draco (*pictured*). So brutal are the punishments prescribed that the so-called Draconian Laws are said to have been written in blood, and people are executed.

c600 BC

▼ Coins are introduced and first used as currency in Athens.

594 BC

▼ Statesman and lawmaker Solon (*pictured*) institutes new constitutional and judicial reforms in Athens. Men over 18, regardless of social class, can now attend the *ekklesia* – the Athenian assembly. Property rights of the poor are protected, debt slavery (where people are enslaved to their creditors until they can pay them) is forbidden, and the Draconian Laws are revised.



570 BC

Mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras is born on the island of Samos – his work on the importance of numbers in understanding the natural world helps to develop the field of mathematics.

460–445 BC

The First Peloponnesian War rages between the two leading Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta. The Thirty Years' Peace is declared, but this will only last for 14 years.

478 BC

▼ The Delian League, a group of city-states under the leadership of Athens, is founded in the face of Persian aggression.

480 BC

▼ Another Persian invasion sees a heroic, albeit failed, defence by an alliance of Greek city-states, led by King Leonidas I of Sparta (*right*) at the battle of Thermopylae. Athens is burned but the Persian forces are defeated at Salamis a few weeks later, and again at Plataea in 479 BC. The failed Persian invasion ushers in the Classical period.

490 BC

The Persians are defeated at the battle of Marathon. According to popular legend, prior to the battle, an Athenian messenger named Pheidippides runs around 150 miles over two days to request help from the Spartans.

c507 BC

Athenian democracy is established by the statesman Cleisthenes, who furthers Solon's efforts. He creates a series of reforms called *demokratia* (power of the people), which removes the monopoly over politics held by a small number of prominent families.

214–205 BC

The First Macedonian War is fought between Philip V of Macedonia and Rome, which is supported by its allies in the Aetolian League (a group of Greek states united in opposition to Macedonia). The conflict ends in stalemate.

200–196 BC

Philip V's defeat during the Second Macedonian War causes him to lose much of southern Greece. The newly freed Greek states now find themselves under Roman protection.

171–167 BC

The Third Macedonian War ends the monarchy of Macedonia, which becomes divided into four republics subservient to Rome.

146 BC

▶ The battle of Corinth is fought between Rome and Corinth, along with its allies in the Achaean League. Greece is defeated and becomes directly ruled by Rome. ⊙

The Acropolis of Athens, situated high above the city, was a key religious and municipal site in ancient times

PODCAST

Professor Paul Cartledge discusses life in ancient Greece on the HistoryExtra podcast: *historyextra.com/ancient-greece-pod*

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ANCIENT GREECE

Professor Paul Cartledge answers key questions about one of the world's greatest civilisations

Q: What time period do we define as ancient Greece, and which events bookend that period?

There's really no such thing as 'ancient Greece', in the sense there's a 'modern Greece'. Ancient Hellas is what the Greeks would have called it, and it was really wherever Greeks (Hellenes) lived permanently – where they made homes, spoke Greek, worshipped gods in the Greek way, and so on.

The Greek language is attested as early as c1400 BC in a script we know as Linear B – this was a syllabic script, with every sign standing for a syllable rather than a letter. Linear B was devised for a very different Greek civilisation than the one we're exploring in this essential guide. So, you could say that ancient Greece goes back as far as 1400 BC, but I would date it from around 1000 BC until the end of the Hellenistic period and the death of Cleopatra – who was an Egyptian Greek – in 30 BC. After that, the Roman period of Greek history takes over.

Q: How many 'periods' of ancient Greece were there?

A: Within ancient Greece (c1000–30 BC) there were three broad periods: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic. The beginning of the Archaic period used to be dated to 776 BC, which is the traditional year for the founding of the Olympic Games. This period goes on for about three centuries, so I would say from about 800–c480 BC. There was a turning point in the final two decades of the Archaic period when a tiny handful of Greek cities saw off a great Persian invasion (at the battles

LEFT: **Linear B script on a clay tablet from the c15th century BC** ABOVE: **The forces of Alexander the Great defeat those of India's Rajah Porus in 326 BC; the Greek king died undefeated in any major battle**

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2

Democracy crowns the seated *Demos* (people) of Athens in this marble stele from 337 BC

representatives – who rule for them. The ancients didn't have that notion. They thought if you're going to rule; if you have power (*kratos*); if you choose officials; if you elect generals; if you sit on the council; or if you attend an assembly meeting and raise your right hand and vote, then that was it: they were 'doing' democracy. They were the ruler as well as the ruled; in other words, the Republican notion – no monarch, no single ruler and no tyrant, but everybody in turn fulfilling different roles at different times. And that included being judges. We think that the conduct of legal justice is something quite separate from legislation or holding executive office. The ancient Greeks didn't have a notion of separation of powers. So they were a direct democracy.

Q: How has ancient Greek democracy influenced the way in which democracy has developed since?

A: Oddly enough, very little directly. The word 'democracy', coined by the ancient Greeks, is the universal term for whatever different countries decide their democracy should be. But the direct line of descent stops in ancient Greece; there is no ancient Greek-style direct democracy after the second or first century BC. When, in the early modern period, the word 'democracy' starts creeping back – especially in 17th-century England and 18th-century France and America – then democracy acquires a salience, and people start looking back to the ancient Greeks. But there was a universal agreement in the 19th century, when democracy started expanding quite considerably, that the system – partly because of size – must be indirect. It must be representative. There was, in fact, quite a lot of discussion about the dangers posed by direct democracy in ancient times, namely the danger of it shifting over into mob rule.

Q: Was Alexander the Great really as great as he is often made out to be?

A: Alexander III actually acquired the nickname 'the Great' after his death, but he was certainly unparalleled as a conqueror. As the commander of forces, both in pitched battle and sieges, and in traversing vast unknown terrains, he, quite frankly, was in a league with leaders like Genghis Khan – an elite 'super league' of commanders, if you like. One of the extraordinary things about Alexander the Great was that, technically, he was never defeated in

"THERE IS NO ANCIENT GREEK-STYLE DEMOCRACY AFTER THE SECOND OR FIRST CENTURY BC"

of Salamis and Plataea) and retained their independence. That's traditionally when the Classical period is seen to have started, and that middle period lasted until the death of Alexander the Great, in 323 BC. And then there was the Hellenistic period, which, as I've mentioned, lasted until 30 BC. In this final period, we see a new Greek-dominated Middle East – as far east as modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan – that is dominantly Greek, but that incorporated a certain amount of oriental elements as well.

Q: How did Athenian democracy differ from democracy as we know it today?

A: Typically, those of us who live in a democratic country have a form of democracy known generically as 'representative'. In other words, you and I, on a daily basis, do not rule: we choose people to represent us in parliament. Representative democracies differ from country to country, but they all are the same in that they choose people –

Alexander the Great, shown in a mosaic from c100 BC, deserves a place in an elite 'super league' of commanders, says Paul Cartledge

any battle that made a difference. There were skirmishes when leaders under him were defeated, for example, but he personally never suffered a single failure as a general. And that's really quite an extraordinary feat.

Alexander came to the throne at the age of just 20, after the assassination of his father, Philip II. But he had been commanding armies since the age of 16, and by the time he was 18, he was his father's right-hand man in battle. By 330 BC, Alexander had effectively defeated the Persian empire, but it wasn't enough for him: he then made the decision to push on to what he thought were the outer limits of the entire inhabited world.

Q: How did Alexander die?

A: Well, the evidence for such a climactic event is very confused so we're not sure how, or from what, he actually died in 323 BC. He may have been killed by one of his warlords – some of them would fight for the next 50 or so years over the land Alexander had conquered, and would eventually carve it up into three major kingdoms. Or his death could have been from natural causes. We just don't know for certain.

The main problem was that Alexander died without a living male heir. He had three wives, one of whom, Roxana – from Sogdiana or Bactria, in modern-day Afghanistan – was pregnant at the time of his death and later gave birth to a son (Alexander IV). But both Roxana and her son were murdered by one of the many rivals for Alexander's kingdom, which just shows you how murderous, how vicious the struggle for power was after his death.

RIGHT: **The so-called Alexander Sarcophagus, named for its carvings of the Greek leader, never held his body**

BELOW RIGHT: **Alexander depicted on his deathbed. The cause of his demise is still unknown**

Q: Where is Alexander buried?

A: His tomb has never been found but there is really, in terms of our evidence, only one site in which he conceivably was buried, and as far as we know, his remains have never since been moved from there. And that's Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander died in Babylon and his corpse was mummified so that it could be transported to the capital of Macedonia, a place called Pella in what is now northern Greece. But as it was passing through Damascus in Syria, the funeral procession was interrupted by Ptolemy I – Alexander's former general who, after his death, became ruler of Egypt. Ptolemy effectively hijacked the corpse and took it to what was then his capital, Memphis in Egypt. Alexander had designated Alexandria to be the new capital of Greek Egypt, so his corpse was eventually transferred from Memphis to Alexandria and given a fantastic burial with great ceremony, and placed in a tomb with glass over the top so that his mummified corpse could be viewed. And that's the last we know for sure of where his remains were.

There's a famous story that claims Augustus, the first Roman emperor of Egypt after the death of Cleopatra, made a pilgrimage to the tomb to see the corpse of Alexander. He is said to have been so keen to look at the corpse that he knocked its nose off! At any rate, I have no doubt that Alexander is buried somewhere in Alexandria.

ABOVE: **Alexander the Great with his wife, Roxana, shown in a 1756 painting. The king is known to have had three spouses in total** RIGHT: **An image from c500 BC shows two males embracing. Homosexuality was accepted by the ancient Greeks, but not the Romans**

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X5

Q: Why were homosexuality and bisexuality accepted in ancient Greece but not in Rome?

A: It's very, very hard to say. I think one possible explanation is that if you conquer a people and you think yourself, therefore, superior to them, you look for the things that differentiate your civilisation from theirs. And the Romans singled out their abhorrence, their rejection, of this 'deviant custom' of homosexuality among the Greeks, which they thought was effeminate. So I think that's the answer: the Romans conquered the Greeks; Greeks were therefore seen as feeble; and one manifestation of their feebleness was seen to be their acceptance of homosexuality.

Q: Where was religion practised in ancient Greece?

A: There were specific sites of worship. The ancient Greeks actually had a word that meant a 'cut out space', where a sanctuary, which might or might not include a temple, was sited. So there were shrines and distinct religious spaces.

But religion was really practised everywhere. If you went to battle, you would slaughter an animal before that battle to get the will of the gods. The liver and entrails of the sacrificed animal would be removed and 'read' by *manteis* (seers); if the readings were favourable, you would go into battle. If they weren't, you didn't.

At home, you would have a statue of Hermes just outside your back door. You would pour a libation – wine, olive oil or some other liquid – and that would be your way of making your peace with the gods. There was a notion of there being a type of contract between mortals and the gods – if you, the human, did the gods favours, looked after them and gave them their due, then the gods were bound by contract to do you a favour in return. It was a give and take relationship.

Religion was everywhere, in principle, and just about any phenomenon could have a religious interpretation. A rainbow, for example, was a goddess called Iris; the Sun was the god Helios. So the ancient Greeks were incredibly religious, and that's why it's a bit of a paradox that some Greeks were able to draw a distinction and actually even question whether the gods – Zeus, Hermes and so on – were real, or whether they were figments of human imagination. In other words, we see the beginnings of atheism through humanism, as well as most Greeks being what we would call very religious.

"THE LIVER AND ENTRAILS OF A SACRIFICED ANIMAL WOULD BE 'READ' BEFORE BATTLE"

ABOVE: **An individual consults Pythia, the Delphic Oracle, on this vase fragment from the fourth century BC**

TOP: **The remains of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, where ancient Greeks would seek godly advice**

Q: What role did Oracles play?

A: The Delphic Oracle – the high priestess of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi – was the most significant because it was thought to be the most holy and authoritative. You could consult an oracle by various means – by listening to the cooing of doves or by getting a prophecy, a form of utterance meant to be directly inspired by, in this case, Apollo. And that would tell you an answer to a question.

There were actually two main types of oracle: one was the public, official one, which advised a city or an individual ruler. The other was the purely individual type, which a lot of Greeks at one or other point in their life – typically during life crises such as marriages, births and deaths – would consult.

INTERVIEW: EMMA MASON
WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

LEFT: **Animal sacrifice and offerings were important ways to honour and appease the gods**

BELOW: **A terracotta sheep liver – a votive offering to the gods**

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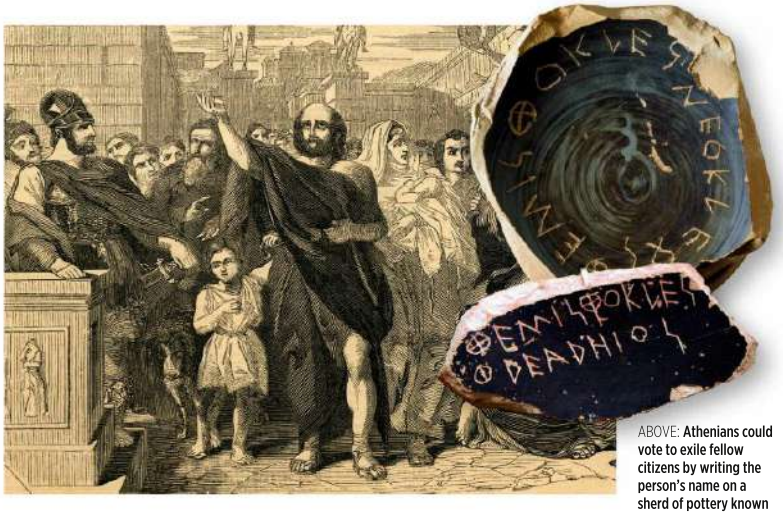
THE BIRTHPLACE OF DEMOCRACY

Athens was ruled by people power for nearly two centuries, establishing a model of politics that would resonate long afterwards



ABOVE: **Athenians could vote to exile fellow citizens by writing the person's name on a sherd of pottery known as an *ostracon***

ABOVE LEFT: **The politician Aristides was briefly ostracised in c482 BC. According to one story, he was asked to scratch his own name on a sherd by an illiterate man who did not recognise him**

The word 'democracy' comes from the Greek *demokratia* – *demos* meaning 'people' and *kratos* 'power' – and the birthplace of that system of government now held above all others around the world was the Greek city-state of Athens. This ancient form of people power did not resemble today's representative democracies, where the people elect someone to act on their behalf, but was a direct democracy in which all citizens could participate in making laws and serving in the bodies that governed them.

Under the principle of *ho boulomenos* (anyone who wishes), Athenian citizens had the right to attend, address and vote in the *ekklesia*, the assembly held every 10 days or so to carry out the political agenda. The meeting place was a hill less than a mile from the Acropolis called the Pnyx, with a space large enough for at least 6,000 citizens. Each session began with a ritual sacrifice before anyone could approach the *bema*, a flat-stone platform, and speak with total freedom of speech.

The *ekklesia* covered areas of policy from declaration of war and military organisation to raising money, maintaining food supplies, nominating magistrates, arranging trials and agreeing on legislation. Votes were held by raising hands, or if this could not determine a winner, then stones would be used to cast ballots. In the special case of ostracism, any Athenian could be sent into exile for 10 years, and so be ostracised, as long as a majority of the minimum necessary 6,000 voters agreed by writing the name of that person on a piece of pottery, called an *ostracon*.

DOING ONE'S DUTY

Setting the agenda was the *boule*, an advisory council tasked with administering the day-to-day business of government, including finance. Its 500 volunteer members were not elected, but randomly selected from the citizenry by drawing lots – a method called sortition, aimed at eliminating corruption as the wealthy could not buy their way into office. To further curb the power-hungry, each member had to be over 30, was limited to serving one year, and could only be in the *boule* for two non-consecutive years during their life.

The same method was used to populate the courts, or *dikasteria*. Every year, 6,000 citizens over the age of 30 were chosen by lot to be jurors and magistrates. Each case, brought by a citizen, had a jury several hundred strong. Only a handful of positions would actually be elected to ensure that someone possessing the right skills or training held the office, most importantly that of the generals. Otherwise, the complex system of the *ekklesia*, *boule*, *dikasteria* and dozens of smaller bodies was intended to keep democracy from being corrupted into an autocracy.

Yet Athenian democracy was vulnerable to powerful figures dominating the process. Critics argued that ignorant and unskilled voters could be swayed by a talented orator or demagogue (a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises to gain power) – such as after the battle of Arginusae in 406 BC when, despite Athens winning, six of the eight generals were tried and executed based on confusing information. Ostracism, too, could be used to get rid of a rival or unpopular figure.

ABOVE: **An illustration of the *boule*, which comprised 500 members randomly selected from the citizens of Athens**
RIGHT: **A decree issued by the *boule* and *ekklesia* – or council and assembly, 445 BC**

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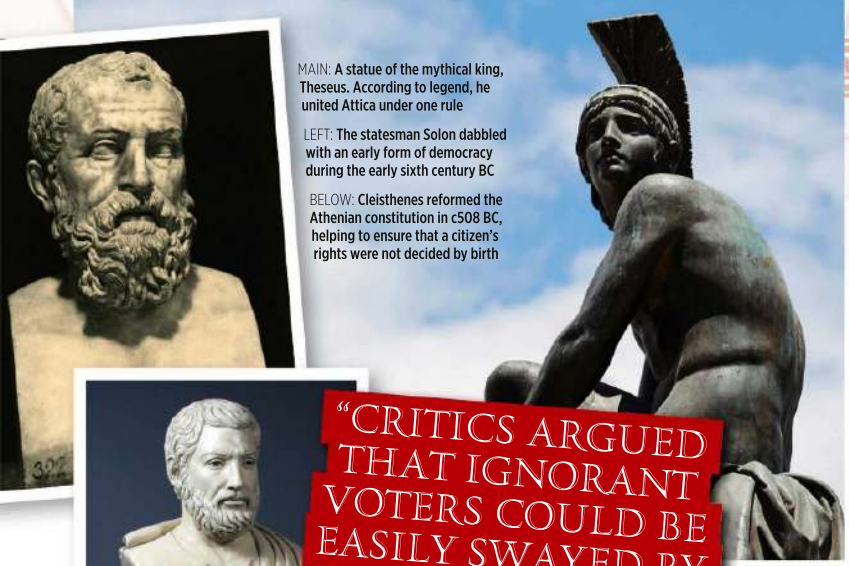


MAIN: **A statue of the mythical king, Theseus. According to legend, he united Attica under one rule**

LEFT: **The statesman Solon dabbled with an early form of democracy during the early sixth century BC**

BELOW: **Cleisthenes reformed the Athenian constitution in c508 BC, helping to ensure that a citizen's rights were not decided by birth**

"CRITICS ARGUED THAT IGNORANT VOTERS COULD BE EASILY SWAYED BY DEMAGOGUES"

Women, slaves and foreigners were excluded from participating. So even though Athens had a population of around 250,000 in the fifth century BC, the actual citizen body numbered only 30,000 on average and peaked at 50,000 to 60,000. Within that, only a few thousand attended the *ekklesia* and volunteered for offices. Compared to the autocracies and oligarchies in other Greek city-states, however, Athens still boasted a huge politically active population, and democracy came to be seen as more than a right: it was a civic duty.

Athens was not actually unique in attempting to introduce such a system of government in Greece, but its democracy was by far the most advanced, the longest-running and best recorded in antiquity. Traditionally, three men have been celebrated as its founders, starting with the mythical king Theseus, the conqueror of the Minotaur who united Attica and first demonstrated how the Athenians would rule themselves.

The second man was the statesman Solon. In the early sixth century BC, he introduced sweeping changes and a new constitution that redefined citizenship and the political structure: splitting the population into four groups based on land production and granting rights according to wealth, not birth. This was a radical shift away from the aristocracy, and the poorest could now vote in the assembly. While Solon's reforms did not last once Athenian noble families broke out into factional fighting, they laid a foundation for another experiment in democracy at the end of the century.

The third, and true, founder of democracy was Cleisthenes. Previously elected as *archon* (chief magistrate) under the tyrant Hippias, he had been forced out of Athens before returning at the invitation of the people. Athenians, fearing attacks from other Greek city-states like Sparta and invasion from Persia, had grown more hostile to the norm of autocratic rule, which laid the foundations for a new political system established by Cleisthenes' bottom-up reforms.

EXTERNAL THREATS

In c507 BC, Cleisthenes created 139 small territorial entities across Attica called *demes*, and decreed that all Athenian men over 18 had to register at one in order to become a citizen. The *deme* transformed the political map so that a citizen's rights depended on the locality rather than entitlement by birth. Cleisthenes then gathered all Athenians, which meant everyone in Attica, into 10 groups, or tribes, breaking the existing aristocratic power structure. The *boule*, which was expanded from Solon's 400 to 500, would be made up of 50 men from each tribe.

Thus, Athenian democracy was born. Its early years brought several serious threats both by rival city-states and two Persian invasions, but in all cases, Athens and its ideology prevailed. The Persian forces of Darius I were defeated at the battle of Marathon in 490 BC, and then the invasion a decade later by his son, Xerxes I, ended with the naval battle of Salamis and the land battle of Plataea.

The next century saw more political changes, most notably by the statesman Ephialtes, and the temporary dismantling of democracy after the Peloponnesian War, which ended with Sparta installing a brutal oligarchy in Athens. Democracy may have been restored and revamped – including citizens being given an allowance to attend the *ekklesia* – but it did not make it through the fourth century BC, being dismantled c322 BC following the failure of the Greek revolt against Macedonian rule. The structure built by Cleisthenes, on foundations by Solon, may have been gone, yet the idea of people power had changed the world, and endured.

WORDS: JONNY WILKES

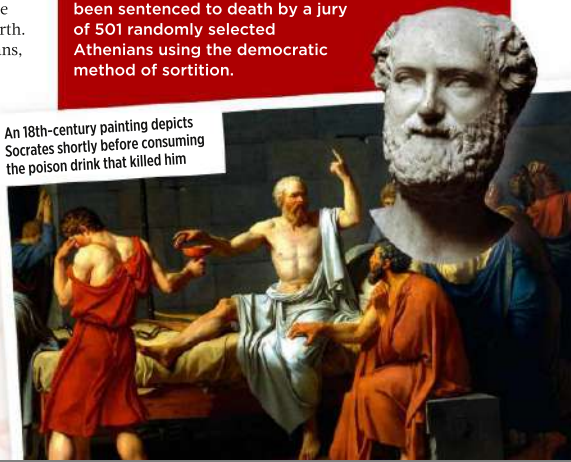
FIGHT THE PEOPLE POWER

Not everyone in Athens gave the idea of democracy their vote...

Even though Athenian democracy far from gave all people political representation, there were intellectuals and leaders at the time who condemned the system as too inclusive. Critics warned of mob rule or, at least, a poor majority of citizens in the *ekklesia* who were ignorant and untrained, and so predisposed to get decisions wrong. To make this point, Socrates compared politics to a ship, which needed a skilled captain rather than just anyone attempting to navigate.

The general and revered historian Thucydides, playwright Aristophanes, and the so-called 'Old Oligarch', author of the pamphlet *The Constitution of the Athenians*, all agreed that democracy would breed corruption and demagoguery. Among the strongest opponents, however, was Plato (a pupil of Socrates). He did have cause to be sceptical: in 399 BC, his beloved teacher had been sentenced to death by a jury of 501 randomly selected Athenians using the democratic method of sortition.

The playwright Aristophanes criticised democracy's shortcomings



An 18th-century painting depicts Socrates shortly before consuming the poison drink that killed him

WIVES, MOTHERS AND WORKERS

Some city-states were worlds apart when it came to female emancipation, but Greek society still very much revolved around men

In popular depictions of ancient Greece, the mythical Amazons loom large. A tribe of independent, fierce and powerful warriors, their legend is inspired by real nomadic women who lived in the Eurasian Steppe – and it's very revealing about the roles women played in Greek society. For the ancients, these strong women represented a threat to the patriarchal order, and most versions of the myth see them tricked and overcome by the hero Herakles, the ultimate symbol of masculine strength.

For the ancient Greek ideal, you might instead look to Penelope, the wife of Odysseus in Homer's *Odyssey*. Beset by more than a hundred suitors, she remains calm, dedicated to her domestic duties, and, most importantly by the standard of the day, loyal to her husband.

When considering the lives of ancient Greek women, though, it's important, says classicist Paul Cartledge, to distinguish between different Greek city-states. While many sources of the period come from Athens, we cannot assume that women's role in Athenian society was representative of the lives of women across the rest of Greece. The lives of Spartan women would have been very different from their Athenian sisters, as we'll see over these two pages.

Another key difference is status. While no woman would have found themselves on equal footing with men in ancient Greek society, the lives of women would have greatly depended upon how wealthy their father or husband was. Greater wealth did not necessarily mean they enjoyed greater freedom, though. "If you were a woman in Athens, the richer you were, broadly speaking, the more confined you were," explains Cartledge.

Here, we take a closer look at the different elements of women's lives in ancient Greece...

LEFT: **A marble relief shows Greek soldiers fighting the Amazons – a mythical group of female warriors**

BELOW: **In Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope demonstrates her loyalty to her husband when beset by suitors**

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MOTHERHOOD AND THE HOME

The lives of ancient Greek women were largely confined to the home. Men would serve the *polis* – state – while the domain of women was the *oikos* – the household. The women's quarters of a house, the *gynaikon*, were located on the upper floors, and wives were expected to bear and raise children and undertake domestic duties. Marriage itself would usually take place when a *kore* (maiden) was between 13 and 15 years old; only after the birth of her first child would she technically become a *gyne* (woman).

In ancient Greek society, the reputation of women was in all cases to be preserved. Athenian historian Thucydides, writing in the fifth century BC, famously asserted of women: "The greatest glory is to be least talked about among men, whether in praise or blame." This meant that many wealthy Athenian women were supervised and chaperoned by male relatives when outside, and in some cases not allowed to leave the house at all.

For Spartan women, however, life was different from their Athenian counterparts. They rarely married before the age of 20, while motherhood gave them enhanced status; raising future warriors was considered one of the most important roles in Spartan society. Women in Sparta (and in Delphi, Gortyn, Thessaly and Megara) could also own land, and because of military campaigns that took men away for long periods of time, they often had control of their own homes.

ABOVE LEFT: **Women are shown carding wool on a fifth-century BC drinking cup, now held in a Berlin museum**
LEFT: **Raising warriors was an important duty for Spartan women – here, a son leaves his mother to go to battle**

WORK

Though life for Athenian women held many restrictions, religion provided a viable career path for those hailing from aristocratic backgrounds. In fact, the most senior religious office of the state – high priestess of the Athena Polias – was a female role. This, and other similar positions within Athens' religious cults, would have afforded the officeholders a certain degree of public influence, and in some cases, payment and property.

There is also the story of a pioneering Athenian midwife named Agnodice. According to legend, Agnodice – concerned at the high number of local women dying in childbirth – decided to disguise herself as a man and study medicine. According to some versions of the tale, the midwife would 'reveal' her true gender to patients in order to gain their trust, leading envious male doctors to accuse her of seducing pregnant women. While the existence of Agnodice is still debated by scholars, her legend has been used by women to support their role in medicine since the 17th century.

However, a more common – and certainly real – profession for many women of the time was that of sex worker. Of these, it's known that there were two particular groups of workers, called *hetairai* and *pornai*. A *hetaira* would have been able to read and write, and been employed to work for the higher classes in society. They would have also served as a companion – perhaps more comparable to the role of a geisha in Japanese culture.

Meanwhile, *pornai* (from which we get the modern word 'pornography') would have spent their time working in a brothel and were expected to serve all levels of the city's men, from the elite to members of the lower classes.

DID YOU KNOW?

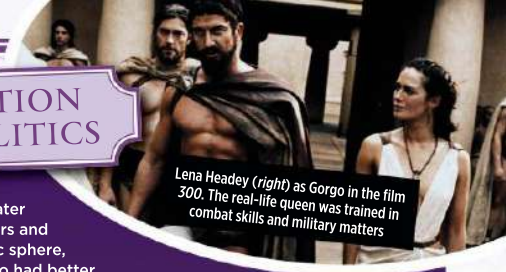
DEADLY DELIVERY

As well as being the ancient Greek goddess of hunting and wild animals, Artemis was also a deity of childbirth. If a woman died during labour, it was said she had been struck by one of Artemis' silver arrows – which were apparently painless.

RIGHT: **A fifth-century BC relief depicts a goddess, mother and nurse with a newborn infant. The artwork may have been offered to a healing deity as thanks for ensuring the safe delivery of a woman's child**

BELOW: **A Greek illustration shows a man enjoying the company of a courtesan a courtesan**

EDUCATION AND POLITICS



Lena Headey (*right*) as Gorgo in the film *300*. The real-life queen was trained in combat skills and military matters

Much like their greater freedoms as mothers and within the domestic sphere, Spartan women also had better access to education than their counterparts in other Greek city-states. While their early education would have taken place at home rather than in a school, women were seen as a key part of Spartan society and allowed to make business transactions. One famous example of the greater opportunities available to Spartan women (albeit noble women) concerns the fifth-century BC Spartan queen, Gorgo. The only known child of Cleomenes I, king of Sparta, Gorgo (who later married King Leonidas I) was schooled in literature, culture and physical education – the latter of which included wrestling and combat skills. Indeed, Gorgo was noted by fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus as a woman of great wisdom; she advised her father on military matters, and is sometimes credited as being one of history's first cryptanalysts.

For Athenian women, however, there was no such freedom to participate in their city-state's political and social life. Even if they were educated in some manner of business dealings, they could not by law enter into any contract beyond the value of one *medimnos* of barley – a small amount that ensured any transaction was restricted to domestic purchases.

And while Athens is lauded as the birthplace of democracy, Athenian women were never true 'adults' in the eyes of the law. This inequality had long echoes into the 20th century; women in modern Greece didn't have the unconditional opportunity to vote until 1952.

ARTS AND CULTURE

While women were generally excluded from the arts, one of ancient Greece's most celebrated poets was a woman named Sappho. Born in either Eressos or Mytilene on the island of Lesbos, likely to a wealthy family (given that she could read and write), Sappho's lyrics and poetry were remarkable for their candid depictions of passion and sexuality – particularly between women. The seventh-century BC poet was even dubbed by Plato as the "Tenth Muse", and honoured on ancient coins.

It's also possible to find evidence of women artists, such as Kora, who was from Sicyon and active around 650 BC. Along with her artist father, Dibutades, she is credited with the invention of relief modelling. According to a popular tale, Kora fell in love with one of her father's apprentices, and traced the outline of his face in charcoal on a wall. Dibutades later filled the outline in clay, creating the first relief.

Another example of a woman who broke the mould was the fifth-century BC artist Timarete, who, according to the Roman author Pliny the Elder, "scorned the duties of women and practised her father's art".

WORDS: ELINOR EVANS

A statue of the poet Sappho stands on her native island of Lesbos

Kora apparently traced the outline of her lover's face on a wall as he slept

WHO'S WHO IN ANCIENT GREECE?

Get to know some of the civilisation's most influential people

SOLON

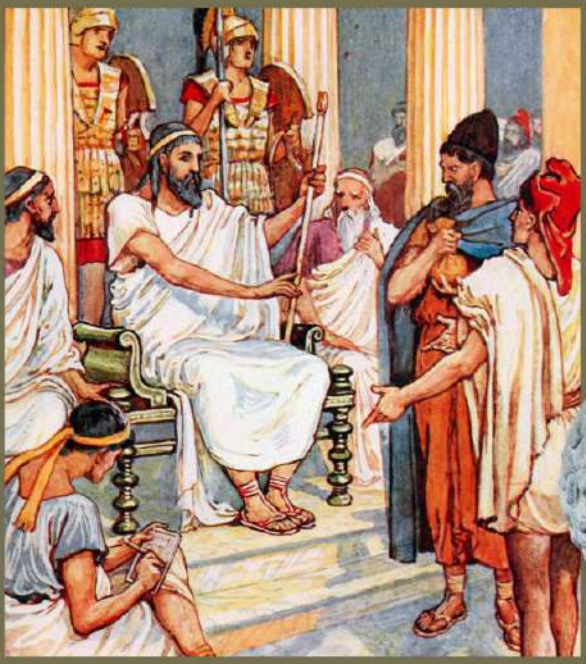
c630–c560 BC

One of the innovations the ancient Greeks are most famed for is democracy – a political system of ruling by the people as opposed to by a monarch or dictator – and its grandfather is considered to be the Athenian magistrate Solon.

Born in the late seventh century BC, Solon was chosen to become a governor or *archon* of Athens. Through his economic reforms, he freed those who had been forced into debt-slavery for not being able to pay their creditors, and encouraged people to take up trades to avoid poverty.

Thanks to Solon, all Athenian male citizens could also attend the general assembly for the first time, and rule was taken from being solely in the hands of the city-state's aristocratic families.

Many of the lawmaker's reforms failed initially, as Athens was temporarily ruled by the tyrant Peisistratos a few years after Solon left the city. His efforts, however, would lay the foundations for the reforms brought in by Cleisthenes a few decades later, which formally established democracy in Athens.



Solon was a statesman, lawmaker and poet, and is often credited with having laid the foundations for Athenian democracy

GETTY IMAGES X7, ALAMY X3

HIPPOCRATES c460–c375 BC

Unusually for the ancient world, physician and philosopher Hippocrates believed that illnesses had rational rather than supernatural explanations. At the time, the gods and magical curses were often blamed for causing disease. Instead, Hippocrates' pupils were encouraged to observe their patients, note their symptoms, and analyse how their illnesses progressed. He established medicine as a formal profession, and the Hippocratic Oath – a code of conduct for doctors – still inspires the one taken by physicians around the world today. He was also a believer in exercising and eating a healthy diet as a way of preventing and treating disease. The work of Hippocrates later inspired the physician Galen (AD 129–c210), and the ideas of both men were treated as fact until the late medieval period.

SOPHOCLES

c496–406 BC

As much as we love a laugh when we go to the theatre, there's something about a tragic story that appeals and pulls at the heartstrings, and we have the Athenians to thank for the genre of tragedy. Watching a play in ancient Greece was a favourite pastime, and festivals held to honour the god Dionysus saw three dramatic genres emerge: tragedy, comedy and satyr drama (the latter combining both). The works of Sophocles are some of the earliest-surviving tragic plays, and include *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*.

Born just outside Athens in the early fifth century BC, Sophocles' talents first came to prominence when he won first prize for tragedy in the Dionysian festival, beating the Athenian king of drama, Aeschylus.

As well as his work as a dramatist, Sophocles worked as a treasurer, diplomat and general, and is thought to have written more than 120 plays, though only seven complete works survive. He also did much to revolutionise drama, with perhaps his most important innovation being the addition of a third actor to a play. Previously two actors would play several roles, but with the addition of one more, more characters could be written, and the plot could become more varied and exciting.

SAPPHO

c630–570 BC

Thought to have been born in the late seventh century BC on the island of Lesbos, poet Sappho was from an aristocratic family. On Lesbos, she ran an academy for young unmarried women devoted to Eros and Aphrodite – the god and goddess of love. Sappho was considered one of the greatest lyric poets of her day and mainly wrote on the themes of love, family and friendship. While some say she died of old age, other stories claim that she threw herself off a cliff after having her heart broken. Three centuries after her death, Sappho became the source of parody and was characterised as a promiscuous homosexual – the term 'lesbian' is derived from the island where she was born and 'sapphic' refers to love between women, as well as the four-line form that Sappho's poetry usually took. There is little concrete evidence about her true sexuality, though, and she wrote as passionately about men as she did women.

A 19th-century French painting of Sappho with her lover Phaon, who supposedly broke her heart

"SAPPHO WAS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE GREATEST LYRICAL POETS OF HER DAY"

SOCRATES c470–399 BC

We only know the ideas of Socrates – the founding father of western philosophy – thanks to his pupil, Plato: Socrates didn't write anything down, but luckily Plato did. Before pursuing philosophy, Socrates fought in the Peloponnesian War and worked as a stonemason. His philosophical ideas were extremely radical for the time – he believed that people should focus on their behaviour and morality rather than wealth and power. Although he attracted many scholars to his discussions, Socrates wasn't widely liked in Athens and was an outspoken opponent of democracy. In 399 BC, he was sentenced to death after being charged with corrupting the city's youth and disrespecting the gods.

PYTHAGORAS c570–c495 BC

To the ire of many students, the theories of mathematician Pythagoras are still taught today. We have little concrete knowledge about his life, though it's thought he was born in Samos in the early-sixth century BC. After travelling, Pythagoras settled in Italy where he formed a secret group of students who lived by a philosophy based around mathematics – appropriately known as the Pythagoreans. He is credited with discovering the functional significance of numbers, as well as the Pythagoras theorem, used to calculate the length of the sides in a right-angled triangle.

PERICLES c495–429 BC

General and statesmen Pericles oversaw Athens during its golden age and was so well respected that he was lauded as the city's 'first citizen'. He led Athens during the first few years of the Peloponnesian War and expanded the Delian League – a group of Greek states – into an empire. A lover of the arts and literature, his ambitious building programme, which included the Acropolis, helped Athens become the cultural and educational centre of the ancient world. He succumbed to the Plague of Athens in 429 BC.

HERODOTUS c484–c425 BC

Without Herodotus, we might not know as much as we do about the events of ancient Greece. He's believed to have hailed from Halicarnassus, a Greek city that was under Persian rule at his birth in the early fifth century. In around 425 BC, he published *The Histories* – an account of the Greco-Persian Wars. This was the first time that a writer had attempted to explain the cause of an event, or study it in such detail – and so historical analysis was born. Herodotus' work was based on his travels across the Persian and Greek territories and the stories he collected on the way. What we know about the battle of Marathon is all thanks to Herodotus. Other writers criticised his weaving of fiction into his narratives, but he is widely considered the first true historian.

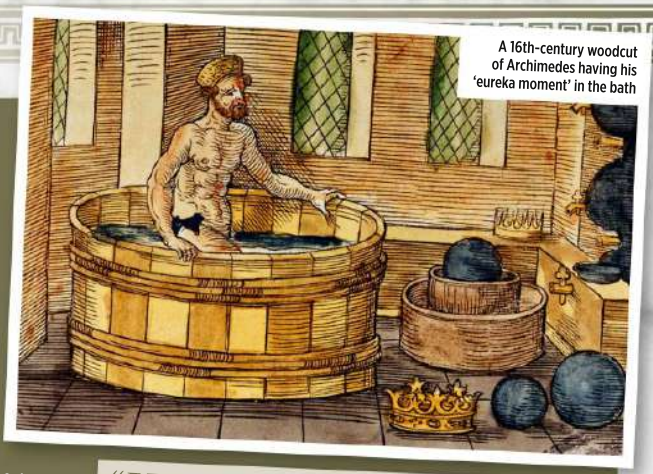
ALEXANDER THE GREAT

356–323 BC

Despite his short rule, Alexander the Great transformed the ancient world in just over a decade. In 336 BC, after the assassination of his father, Alexander ascended the Macedonian throne at the age of 20; educated by the great philosopher Aristotle, he was an adept leader and strategist. Under his rule, Macedonia continued asserting its power within Greece. Even more impressively, Alexander conquered territories that were formerly part of the Persian empire without losing a single major battle, including Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. At 25, he was leader of Greece, pharaoh of Egypt and overlord of Asia Minor, and for the next decade he consolidated his sprawling empire, which spanned three continents. His death at the age of 32 saw his empire broken up, and many historians have since questioned how much more he could have achieved had he lived longer. Today he is still considered one of history's greatest military commanders.

ARCHIMEDES

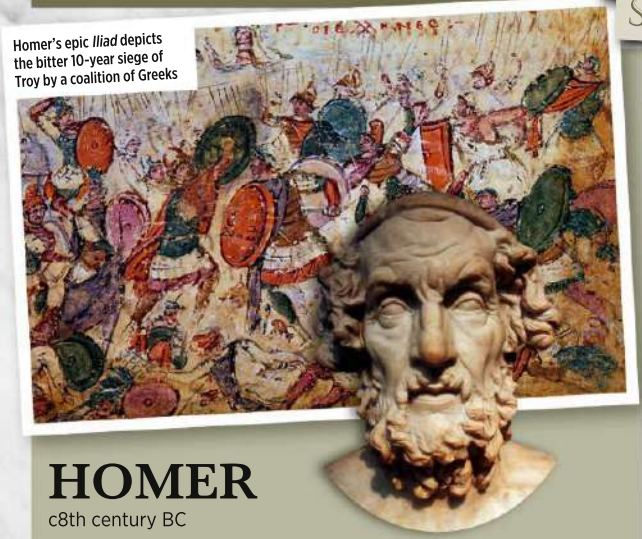
c287–212 BC



A 16th-century woodcut of Archimedes having his 'eureka moment' in the bath

If you've ever had a brilliant idea and shouted "Eureka!", you have Greek scientist and inventor Archimedes to thank for that. According to an anecdotal story, Archimedes allegedly discovered that the amount of water displaced when he entered his bathtub was equal to the amount of upward force put on the body. He was so delighted that he apparently ran down the street naked, shouting "Eureka!" – Greek for "I have found it!". Whether or not the story is true, Archimedes, who hailed from Syracuse in Sicily, is one of ancient Greece's most famous scientists, inventors and mathematicians. He discovered the law of hydrostatics, the principles of the lever and created siege engines. It's thought that he even designed machines that could lift ships out of the water, and found an accurate approximation of pi – the ratio of the circumference of any circle to the diameter of that circle. Despite this, Archimedes' mathematical writings were little known in his own time – it wasn't until the sixth century AD that they gained a wide readership.

"HE WAS SO DELIGHTED THAT HE APPARENTLY RAN DOWN THE STREET SHOUTING 'EUREKA!'"



Homer's epic *Iliad* depicts the bitter 10-year siege of Troy by a coalition of Greeks

HOMER

c8th century BC

If you were to take an epic journey or voyage – physical or spiritual – some may describe it as an odyssey. The use of this term goes all the way back to a poem written during the early days of the ancient Greeks. Few concrete facts are known about the life of Homer, but legends claim he was a blind bard from the island of Chios and that his poems would have been spread orally before being written down. His work is presumed to include the *Iliad* – one of the most important sources about the legendary Trojan War – and the *Odyssey* – an account of the epic journey taken by Odysseus after the fall of Troy.

The works were the foundation of ancient Greek literature and are still considered some of the most important in the western canon. There is some debate over exactly who wrote the poems attributed to Homer, but experts agree they were written around the late eighth to early seventh century BC. Whether Homer did write them or not, the epics shaped Greek culture, highlighted popular values of the time (such as honour and courage), and remain some of the oldest surviving works of literature still widely read today.

ARISTOTLE 384–322 BC

Philosopher and polymath Aristotle came from a tradition of great thinkers – he was a pupil of Plato who was himself a student of Socrates. Aristotle founded a school of philosophy at the Lyceum in Athens and was considered influential enough to be the teacher of the young Alexander the Great. Aristotle's writings were some of the first to create a system of western philosophy that included logic, science, morality, politics and metaphysics. He heavily influenced Christian theology, as well as medieval Islamic and Jewish traditions, and his work is still studied and analysed today.

PHEIDIAS c480–430 BC

Pheidias was one of the most famous artists of the ancient world whose greatest works have unfortunately not stood the test of time. Little of his life is known, but he worked mainly in Athens before creating a workshop at Olympia. Here, he created his greatest masterpiece – a gold and ivory seated statue of Zeus that became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. He also created three monuments to Athena, as well the Parthenon carvings – these survive today, and those in the British Museum are known as the Elgin Marbles. Pheidias' later years took a dramatic turn when he was thrown in prison after being accused of embezzling gold intended for a statue of Athena; it's thought he died while incarcerated.

ANYTE OF TEGEA c3rd century BC

Anyte was so celebrated as a poet in the third century BC that she was widely known as the female Homer. Born in Arcadia in the Peloponnese, she stood out from the crowd as one of the first poets to focus on the natural world rather than the gods or the supernatural. Ancient Greek poets were often commissioned to write epitaphs and epigrams to celebrate battle victories and heroes, but Anyte instead memorialised loved ones and favourite pets. More of her work survives than any other ancient Greek female writer, except for Sappho.

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X2

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Greek city-states are famed for their cultural expression, but the grim reality was that none could thrive without mastering the art of war

Classical Greece (c480–323 BC) is chiefly remembered for its poetry, statues and extraordinary works of architecture such as the Parthenon. Yet for all the energy the ancient Greeks expended on forging art for the ages, they also dedicated a great deal to mastering the art of war.

One of the main reasons for this was competition. In the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Greece wasn't a single country like it is today. It was made up of lots of smaller city-states (from Athens to Sparta, Corinth to Thebes), all competing for finite land or resources. Such rivalries were often resolved at the point of a sword. Then there was Persia. This regional superpower attempted to conquer Greece more than once.

The resulting conflicts produced some of the most celebrated clashes in history – the Athenians' victory over the Persians at Marathon (which, prior to the battle, reputedly saw Pheidippides run 150 miles from Athens to request help from the Spartans), and Lysander's brilliant naval triumph over Athens to end the Peloponnesian War, to name just two.

Just as Classical Greece saw enormous leaps forward in politics and culture, so it also witnessed advances in military technologies. These included the *trireme*, the galley that helped Athens rule the waves in the fifth century BC, and the fearsome Macedonian *phalanx*.

By the end of the Classical period, Alexander the Great was using these advances to turn the tables on the Persians and forge an enormous empire. Greek warfare would now be exported across the known world – with history-shaping consequences.

A modern illustration shows Sparta sailing to victory against the Athenians at the naval battle of Aegospotami in 405 BC

Spartan men and boys were required to undergo a gruelling training regime to prepare them for battle

Gerard Butler as Sparta's King Leonidas in the blood-soaked war epic *300*

SPARTA'S WAR MACHINE

Ancient Greece's warrior-society produced skilled and fearless fighters

All Greek city-states took their military seriously. But only one lived and breathed martial prowess, and that was Sparta. Sparta was a true warrior-society, as men discovered at the earliest of ages. At the tender age of seven, boys were plucked from their families and entered into a 23-year military training regime designed to turn them into consummate warriors.

From the outset, the trainee fighters were taught that loyalty to their city should always take precedence over self-preservation. This mantra was reflected in the austere nature of their training: they were subjected to continuous (often violent) competitions, given meagre food rations, and encouraged to steal food in order to prepare themselves for life in a warzone. Worse still, they were often encouraged to mistreat the helots, Sparta's slave class.

Women, too, bought into the warrior ethos. They were expected to keep physically fit, while mothers reportedly told their sons before they left for battle, "Come back with your shield, or on it."

This unstinting dedication to war made the Spartans feared opponents, famed for their bravery. Such courage earned them a place in history: 300 Spartans were famously among those who fought against a massive Persian army at Thermopylae (*see page 56*).

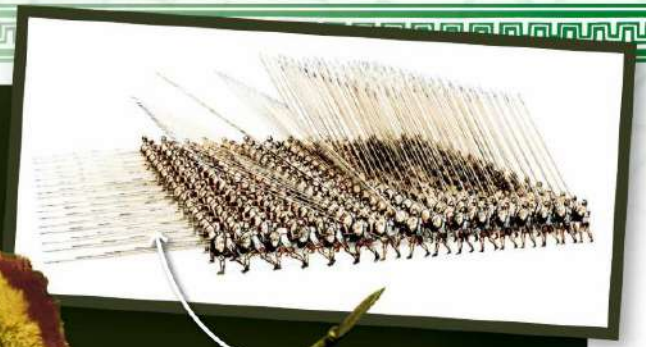
In 404 BC, the Spartans used their martial prowess to unseat Athens as the dominant power in the Greek world at the climax of the Peloponnesian War (*see page 46*). Just over 30 years later, the Thebans invaded the region of Laconia and freed many of the helots. For all their military acumen, the Spartans' spell at the top table of Greek powers was to be short-lived.

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X2

HOPLITE FIGHTER

A guide to the footsoldiers of ancient Greek armies

When the Greek city-states went to war, it was the hoplites who formed the backbone of their armies. The hoplites were not professional soldiers but primarily free citizens (often farmers and artisans) able to afford linen and bronze armour. From the eighth or seventh century BC, hoplites started fighting in the *phalanx,* a formation that helped them achieve a string of notable victories over the Persians, such as the triumph at Marathon in 490 BC.



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The Macedonian *phalanx* swept the known world before it

If one hoplite was a fearsome prospect, then how about 256? That was the number that joined forces to form the Macedonian *phalanx*, an infantry formation that was a cornerstone of Alexander the Great's extraordinary conquests in the fourth century BC.

HARD NUT
The fighter's helmet was often decorated with a horsehair crest – these could be black and white, or multicoloured. Helmets were sometimes decorated with bronze animal horns and ears, and could even be painted as well.

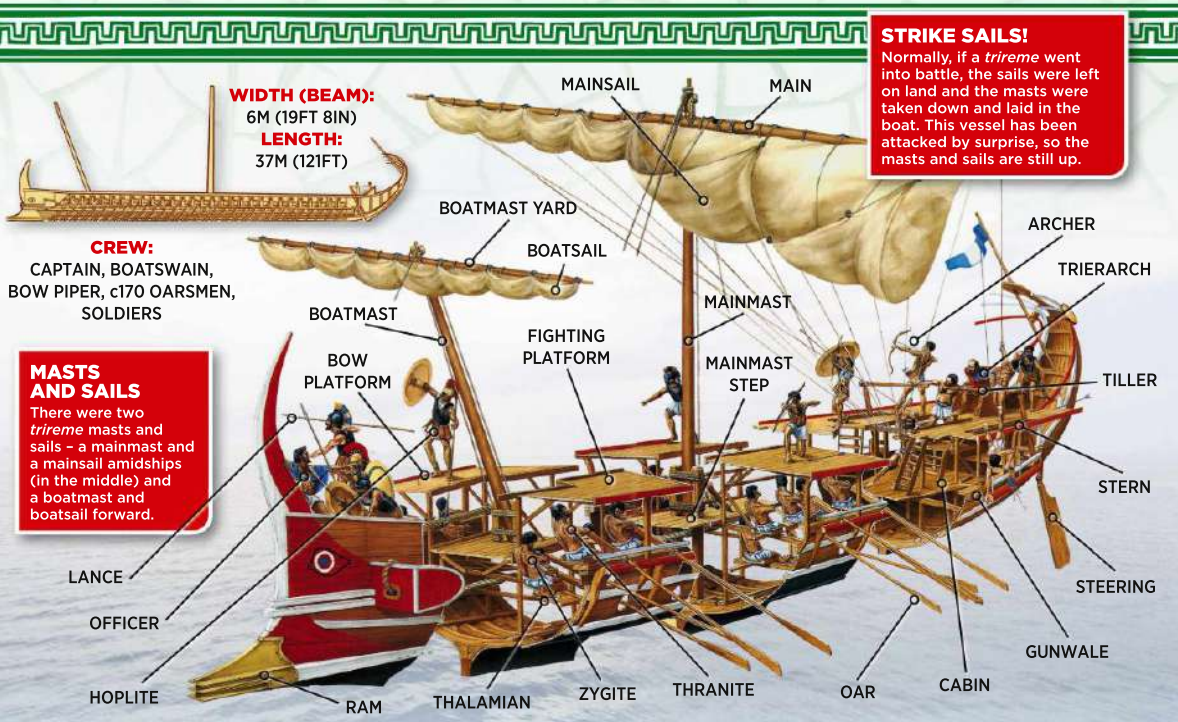
BODY ARMOUR
The hoplite's body was protected by the *cuirass*, a breastplate and backplate fastened together. This was sometimes fashioned from bronze but was more often made up of layers of canvas or linen glued together to form a stiff shield.

SHORT SWORD
If his spear snapped or the chase was on for a routed enemy, the hoplite often turned to his short sword: the *xiphos*. The *xiphos* featured a blade of around two feet and was usually carried on a strap under the fighter's left arm.

PROTECTIVE SHIELD
In his left hand the hoplite carried the *aspis*, a heavy wooden shield measuring around one metre in diameter. The shield rested on the fighter's shoulders – and, courtesy of a leather fastening for the forearm, was particularly manoeuvrable.

DEADLY SPEAR
Hoplites went into battle carrying a long spear called a *dory*. This was eight feet of iron-tipped brutality, with a deadly blade at the top end and a spike at the bottom end, which acted as a counter-weight and a secondary killer. The spears used in Alexander the Great's Macedonian phalanx were even longer: 13–21 feet.

GETTY IMAGES X5, ARC ANGEL X1, AKG IMAGES X1, DK IMAGES X1



KILLER ON THE HIGH SEAS

The *trireme*, the high-speed galley that packed a punch, helped Athens rule the waves in the fifth century BC

No ancient Greek city-state could hold its own without some degree of mastery of the seas – and at the heart of the quest for maritime power was a war galley called the *trireme*. The *trireme* was the dreadnought of its day, a state-of-the-art killing machine that could race into battle at top speed and pack a destructive punch when it got there.

It's thought to have been crewed by around 170 oarsmen in three tiers (known as *thranites, zygites* and *thalamians*) along each side of the vessel, propelling it across the waves at speeds of up to 8mph. But it really came into its own in the heat of battle, courtesy of a bronze-sheathed battering ram affixed to the prow, which was used to sink enemy ships. And if that didn't do the trick, the oarsmen were complemented by a posse of hoplites and archers primed to board enemy ships.

Excavations suggest that the Athenian *trireme* was the epitome of the type, playing a crucial role in the Greek victory over the Persians in the battle of Salamis. Can it be any coincidence that the vessel's heyday – the fifth century BC – coincides with the height of Athens' power?

BATTLES OF THE ANCIENTS

Three of the most significant clashes in Greek history

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

◀ The Peloponnesian War (460–404 BC) saw Sparta and Athens squaring up for a clash that changed the course of history. The war can be divided into three stages: the first a 10-year series of inconclusive clashes; the second, a six-year truce. Yet there was nothing inconclusive about the third phase. In 405 BC the Spartan general Lysander defeated the Athenian fleet at Aegospotami, leading to Athens' surrender. Sparta was now the undisputed top dog in the region.

THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

◀ When Athenian forces attacked a huge Persian invading army at Marathon in 490 BC, the stakes couldn't have been higher. Victory would provide a huge shot in the arm for the nascent Athenian democracy; defeat would see it swallowed up by the Persian empire. Fortunately, the Athenians' commander Miltiades executed a brilliant battle plan, drawing the best Persian troops into his army's centre before surrounding and routing them. The scene was now set for ancient Greece's golden age.

THE MACEDONIAN WARS

◀ These four conflicts, fought between the Greek kingdom of Macedonia and Rome in the third and second centuries BC, saw a dramatic reversal in fortunes. Macedonia under King Philip V bested Rome in the first war, but suffered defeats in the second and third. The fourth saw Macedonia turned into a Roman province in the second century BC; Rome would remain the dominant force in the Mediterranean for generations. ⊙

WORDS: SPENCER MIZEN

FUN AND GAMES

Religion formed the bedrock of ancient Greek life, but there was still time for other leisure activities

In a section of his c350 BC ethical treatise *Nicomachean Ethics*, Greek philosopher Aristotle ponders the meaning and importance of leisure in ancient life. "Happiness is thought to depend on leisure; for we are busy that we may have leisure," he writes. But far from being a passive act of relaxation, Aristotle believed that leisure should take the form of an activity that was meaningful in itself, as a way of cultivating virtue – from music to poetry to philosophy. The goal of work, therefore, was not play, but leisure, as the following examples show...

THEATRE

The ancient Greeks took leisure time seriously and theatre provided a way to understand the world around them, and what it meant to be human. The Festival of Dionysus (also known as the Great Dionysia), was held in Athens every March from the sixth century BC – after it was refounded by the tyrant Peisistratus – and played a key role in the development of Greek drama. Honouring Dionysus, the god of wine, the festival is credited with the emergence of tragedy, comedy and satyric drama, with playwrights, actors and sponsors competing for prizes in front of huge audiences.

TRAGEDY

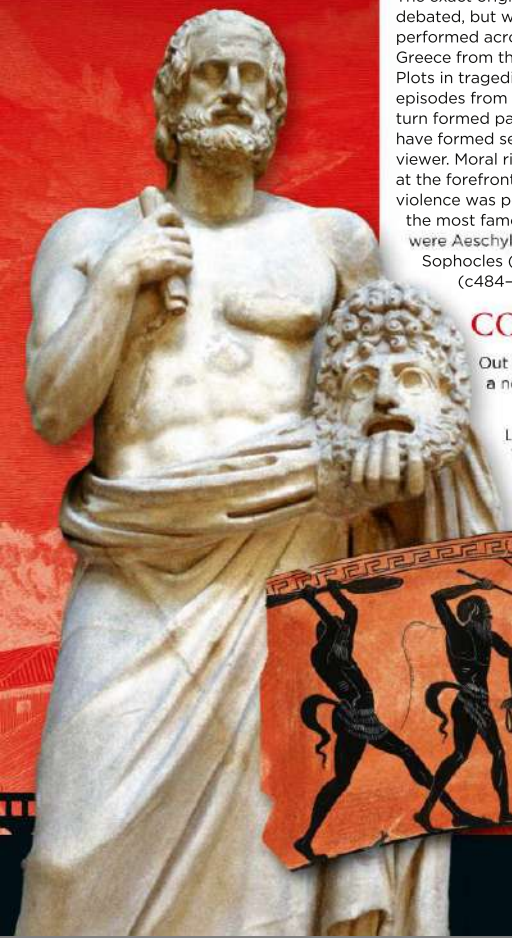
The exact origins of the genre are still debated, but works of tragedy were being performed across theatres in ancient Greece from the late sixth century BC. Plots in tragedies were mostly inspired by episodes from Greek mythology, which in turn formed part of Greek religion, so would have formed serious subject matter for the viewer. Moral rights and wrongs were also at the forefront of tragedy plays, but no violence was permitted on stage. Three of the most famous writers of Greek tragedy were Aeschylus (c525 BC–c456 BC), Sophocles (c496–406 BC) and Euripides (c484–406 BC).

COMEDY

Out of Greek tragedy emerged a new genre – comedy – with perhaps its most notable writer being the Athenian dramatist Aristophanes (c450 BC–c388 BC). His works, like those of many writers of early Greek comedy, were mainly satirical, mocking those in power as well as contemporary events. Over time, as the genre evolved, so too did subject matter, with later dramatists like Menander (342 BC–c292 BC) taking what we might now call a 'sitcom' approach, using fictitious characters from ordinary life.

SATYR PLAYS

Mixing both comedy and tragedy, satyr plays seem to have been introduced in the early fifth century BC, with tragic poet Pratinas frequently credited with the genre's creation. Much shorter than works of tragedy, satyr plays, of which few survive, were light-hearted plays probably designed to offer a contrast to, or relief from, the seriousness of works of tragedy. Mythical half-human, half-goat figures known as satyrs were the stars of such plays, and the genre's popularity can no doubt be gauged by the visual representations that have survived on vases and pottery from the period.



LEFT: Euripides holding a mask of tragedy, the theatrical genre in which he excelled

BELOW: A satyr play, depicted on a vase fragment from the fifth century BC

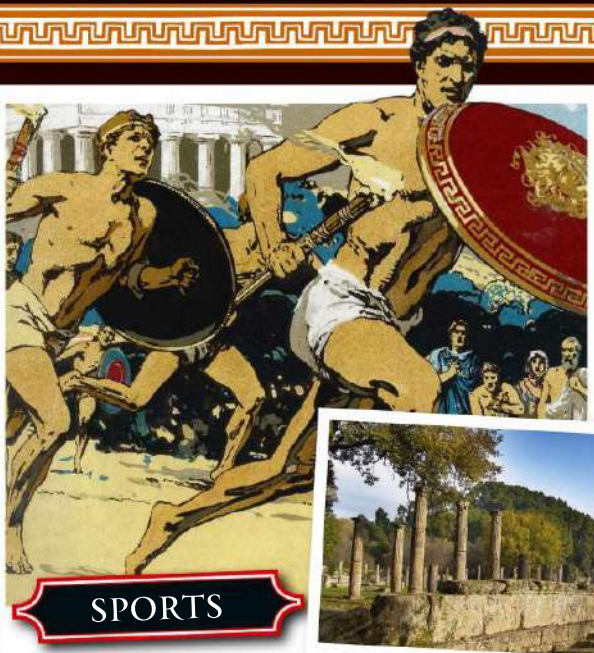
SYMPOSIA

An exclusive pastime for aristocratic men, symposia were the height of intellectual luxury

Literally meaning 'drinking together', symposia were ritualised drinking events hosted by aristocratic men for their peers as a form of entertainment, as well as to display their wealth and sophistication. Often hosted in a purpose-built room (known as an *andron*), men would recline on long, elaborately decorated couches called *klinai*, set around the edges of the room, and drink wine (diluted with water and mixed in a central *krater*). Musicians and other performers would entertain them and those present would recite poetry and discuss philosophical matters. One popular drinking game commonly played at a symposium was *kottabos*, where the dregs of wine from cups would be thrown either onto the floor, in an attempt to create the first letter of a beloved's name, or at a target in the centre of the room.

ABOVE: **Two symposium guests prepare for a game of *kottabos* in this fifth-century BC fresco**

TOP: ***The Symposium of Plato* by Anselm Feuerbach, c1869. Such gatherings were an opportunity for philosophical discussion and entertainment**



SPORTS

A healthy body was as important as a healthy mind

As the ancient Greeks sought to nurture their minds, so too did they work hard to develop their bodies. Most large cities boasted at least one public gymnasium, where men would train and compete in sports such as wrestling, discus throwing, javelin and boxing, as well as socialise.

Athletic competition formed part of many important religious festivals including the Pythian Games, held at Delphi in honour of Apollo, and, of course, the Olympic Games, held in Olympia in honour of the god Zeus.

Initially a one-day event, the ancient Games were extended to three days in 684 BC, and then to five days in the fifth century BC. With a 'sacred truce' called between warring city-states for the duration of the Games, tens of thousands of men, boys and unmarried girls (married women were not allowed to attend) travelled safely to Olympia to watch athletes compete for the honour of their cities. Horse and chariot races, wrestling, boxing, long jump, running, javelin and discus were all on the sporting agenda, with winners earning a wreath of leaves and hero status.

The most important part of the Games was the sacrifice to Zeus, when 100 oxen were sacrificed and burnt, their ash left to form an ever-growing altar that is said to have stood six metres high by AD 200.

Women were not completely left out; they had their own sporting festival at Olympia, too. Held every four years, the Heraia honoured the goddess Hera and saw unmarried women and girls compete in a footrace.

WORDS: CHARLOTTE HODGMAN

ABOVE: **The ruins of ancient Olympia, site of the first Olympic Games**

TOP: **A modern interpretation of the torch-race (part of the Panathenaic Games). The goal was to finish the race with the flame alight**

GETTY IMAGES X 2, ALAMY X2

THE GODS AND THEIR WHIMS

The polytheistic ancient Greeks worshipped a pantheon of deities

The ancient Greeks were polytheistic, meaning that they worshipped multiple deities as well as other supernatural beings. At the core of their religious system were 12 gods and goddesses known as the Olympians (*see opposite page*), who were venerated around Greece, as well as in Greek cities around the Black Sea and other colonies in the western Mediterranean. These deities existed within a hierarchy, with Zeus – king of the gods – holding the top position. They had very different characters and temperaments, with many of them notable for their character flaws (such as jealousy, infidelity and vanity) on top of their great deeds and powers.

The gods were tied closely to individual cities: Athena, for example, was closely associated with Athens, while Zeus was linked with the sacred site of Olympia, in which the Olympic Games were held in his honour. The ancient Greeks also looked to the different deities to help them with specific circumstances or needs, such as Hera for weddings and Ares for matters of war.

Unlike many religions followed today, the ancient Greeks had no common religious text underpinning their belief system – although Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Hesiod's *Theogony* had considerable influence. The relationship between humans and deities was instead based primarily on acts of exchange, with the gods and goddesses offered – and appeased with – gifts, offerings and animal sacrifices.

Religious practices and events were typically organised at a local level, with ceremonies undertaken at altars – and later temples – devoted to individual gods. One particularly gruesome observance was *pharmākos*, in which a man or woman perceived to be 'ugly' was selected as a scapegoat – they would be fed and paraded around before being beaten with green twigs. The scapegoat would then either be ostracised from their community or stoned to death.

There were two main ways of becoming a priest in ancient Greece; the position was either inherited from a parent (either male or female, for some women could be priests too), or a person was appointed by a priest on his or her deathbed. Priests were generally associated with one god specifically, and while they organised religious ceremonies and prayers they were not necessarily religious experts.

The ancient Greeks had no word for religion. The closest terms were *eusebeia* (piety) and *threskeia* (cult). Nonetheless, religious practices and faith were intertwined with daily life. Everything in the natural world was spiritual and divine, and most events were attributed to the influence of the gods. Religious festivals were also important events; the most famous were held every four years at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and Isthmia and included feasting, sacrifice and athletic competitions.

WORDS: RACHEL DINNING

The gods could be appeased by gifts; here, Herakles sacrifices a bull to Aphrodite

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TW

APHRODITE

GODDESS OF SEXUAL LOVE AND BEAUTY

When Cronos castrated his father Uranus and threw his testicles into the sea, the waters frothed and birthed the goddess Aphrodite. Although primarily known as the goddess of sexual love, fertility and beauty, Aphrodite – who was married to Ares – was also worshipped as a deity of the sea. As befits her origin story, her name comes from the Greek word *aphros*, meaning foam.

ATHENA

GODDESS OF WAR, HANDICRAFT AND REASON

Athena was said to have been the favourite child of Zeus. It is said she was born without a mother, instead springing forth from Zeus' forehead (although one story suggests this only occurred after Zeus devoured the pregnant Metis, goddess of counsel). Over time Athena became known as the goddess of war, representing more civilised aspects of battle such as skill, wisdom and justice.

ARTEMIS

GODDESS OF WILD ANIMALS AND THE HUNT

Known for her deftness with a bow and her ability to turn herself – and others – into animals, Artemis was one of the most venerated of Greek deities. Her temple at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World until its destruction in AD 401.

ELVE TOP OLYMPIANS

ARES
GOD OF WAR

In contrast to his sister Athena, Ares embodied the more brutal aspects of warfare. He was never particularly popular with the Greek public and – despite receiving sacrifices in times of warfare – had few formal places of worship in temples. His offspring inherited his penchant for violence: they included Diomedes (who fed his horses a diet of human flesh) and Kyknos (who used strangers' heads to build a temple to his father).

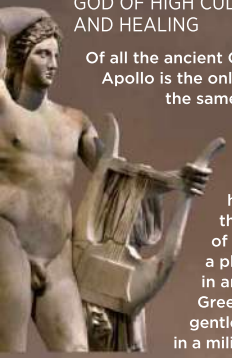
DIONYSUS
GOD OF GRAPE-HARVEST, WINEMAKING AND WINE

Dionysus was the only Olympian with a mortal parent: Semele, lover of Zeus. He gained a cult-like status and was worshipped in woods rather than in temples. According to legend, Dionysus was one of the only gods to successfully return a dead person from the Underworld; this was his mother, who had burned to a crisp after being tricked by Hera into seeing Zeus in his true form.

HERMES
HERALD OF THE GODS

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Hermes appears as a messenger of the gods as well as an escort of the dead on their way to the Underworld, but he was also associated with cattle, sheep and agriculture. People in ancient Greece would attribute to Hermes incidents of good fortune, such as the discovery of small treasures.

APOLLO
GOD OF HIGH CULTURE AND HEALING



Of all the ancient Greek gods, Apollo is the only one to have the same name in Roman mythology. Beautiful and athletic, he is considered the embodiment of *kalos kagathos*, a phrase used in ancient Greece to refer to gentlemanly conduct in a military context.

HEPHAESTUS
GOD OF FIRE AND PATRON OF CRAFTSMEN

Hephaestus was, according to myth, either born lame or became lame in childhood. He seemed to displease his parents, Zeus and Hera, who each threw him out of Olympus at different intervals. Considered 'ugly' by the other Olympians, Hephaestus was venerated for his skill as a craftsman and made weapons for both gods and mortals.

POSEIDON
GOD OF THE SEA

Ill-tempered and vengeful, Poseidon was considered one of the most tempestuous gods of the Olympians. He was god of the sea, earthquakes, storms and – perhaps rather curiously – horses.

DEMETER
GODDESS OF HARVEST AND AGRICULTURE

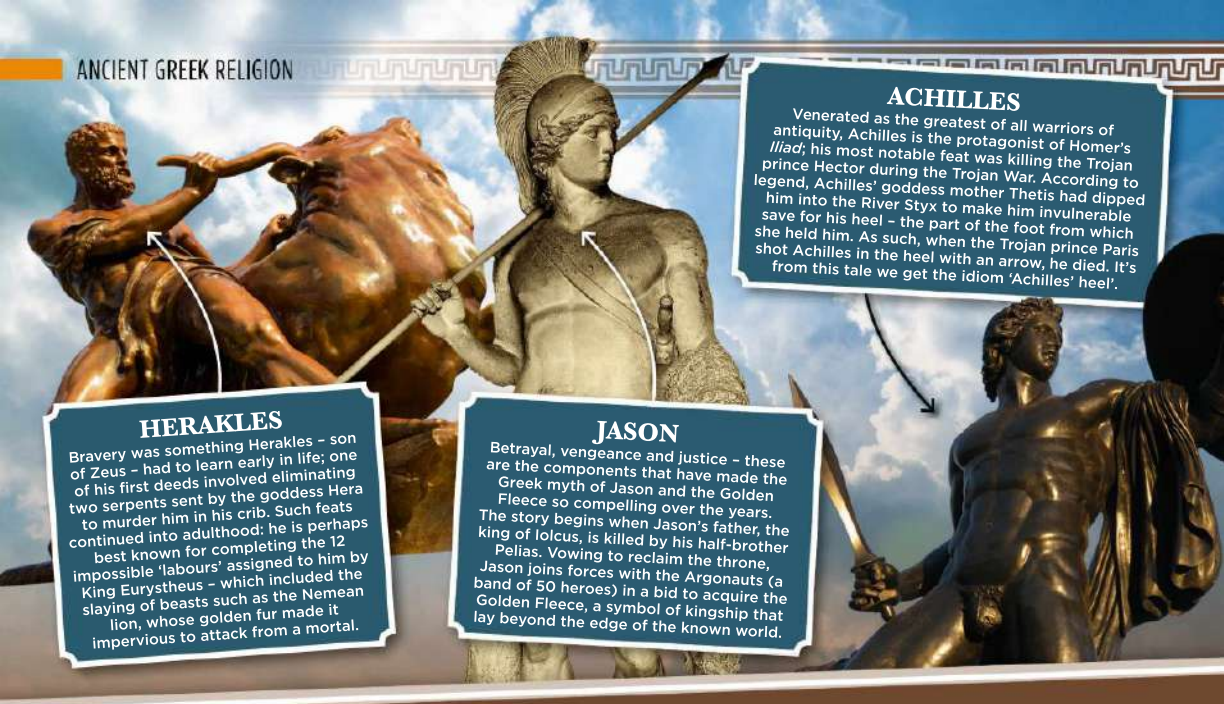
Demeter was said to have taught humans how to sow and plough food, thereby putting an end to their formerly nomadic existence. But just as her powers could be fruitful, so too could they be disastrous: she was believed to bestow famine upon those who displeased her. As goddess of fertility, she also possessed the ability to gift women with a good or bad pregnancy.

HERA
GODDESS OF WOMEN, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND CHILDBIRTH

As the goddess of marriage and monogamy, it's fitting that the goddess Hera was also well-known for her vengeful rage in the face of infidelity. She repeatedly sought revenge on her husband Zeus' many mistresses and illegitimate children.

ZEUS
FATHER OF GODS AND MEN

As king of Mount Olympus (the home of Greek gods) Zeus was father of both gods and mortals alike. He was believed to be omnipotent and was known for having many lovers (much to the chagrin of his long-suffering wife, Hera). ▶



ACHILLES

Venerated as the greatest of all warriors of antiquity, Achilles is the protagonist of Homer's *Iliad*; his most notable feat was killing the Trojan prince Hector during the Trojan War. According to legend, Achilles' goddess mother Thetis had dipped him into the River Styx to make him invulnerable save for his heel – the part of the foot from which she held him. As such, when the Trojan prince Paris shot Achilles in the heel with an arrow, he died. It's from this tale we get the idiom 'Achilles' heel'.

HERAKLES

Bravery was something Herakles – son of Zeus – had to learn early in life; one of his first deeds involved eliminating two serpents sent by the goddess Hera to murder him in his crib. Such feats continued into adulthood: he is perhaps best known for completing the 12 impossible 'labours' assigned to him by King Eurystheus – which included the slaying of beasts such as the Nemean lion, whose golden fur made it impervious to attack from a mortal.

JASON

Betrayal, vengeance and justice – these are the components that have made the Greek myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece so compelling over the years. The story begins when Jason's father, the king of Iolcus, is killed by his half-brother Pelias. Vowing to reclaim the throne, Jason joins forces with the Argonauts (a band of 50 heroes) in a bid to acquire the Golden Fleece, a symbol of kingship that lay beyond the edge of the known world.

SIX HEROES AND VILLAINS OF GREEK MYTHOLOGY

The gods weren't the only ones to make mischief – they were supported by a cast of monsters, Titans and heroes

CRONOS

Greek mythology has its fair share of gruesome deeds and grisly goings-on, but those attributed to Cronos are among the most disturbing. The son of Uranus, ruler of the universe, Cronos dispatched the genitals of his father with a great stone sickle before casting his testicles into the sea. When his own children – Demeter, Hestia, Hera, Hades and Poseidon – were born, Cronos devoured them all in a bid to circumvent a prophecy that suggested they were going to overthrow him.

MEDUSA

Medusa was certainly monstrous, although it could be argued that her villainous deeds were somewhat out of her control. The daughter of the sea gods Phorcys and Ceto, she was a breathtakingly beautiful mortal woman – until she invoked the jealousy of Athena and was transformed into a hideous creature with snakes for hair. According to legend, any person who gazed upon Medusa would turn to stone.

THE MINOTAUR

According to Athenian legend, King Minos – one of Zeus' many sons – imprisoned the murderous minotaur, a mythological creature that was part-bull and part-man (and also the offspring of Minos' wife, Pasiphae) within a labyrinth on the island of Crete. Every nine years, a tribute of children (seven Athenian boys and seven maidens) were fed to the monster until it was killed by Theseus, son of the Athenian king, Aegeus. ⊙

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X5

STYLE SETTERS

From c800 BC until the Roman occupation of the Greek world nearly 800 years later, Greek society moved through three main periods – Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic. With each period came cultural changes that were reflected in the visual arts, whether sculpture, vase painting, wall painting or mosaics. And as Greek power filtered across its borders, so too did its cultural impact.

ARCHAIC PERIOD

The Archaic period in Greek history ran from the eighth century BC until the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BC. In artistic and cultural terms, the most significant advance during this time was the introduction of monumental sculpture, principally life-sized figures in hard stone known as *kouroi* (those of naked young men) or *korai* (those of clothed or draped women), which showed a clear Egyptian influence. These were created and used to either mark graves or offer a religious dedication. The oldest surviving example of the latter is the marble sculpture the Dedication of Nikandre (*pictured left*), created c650 BC. Dedicated to Artemis, it was discovered in 1878.

Archaic pottery showed a distinct movement from abstract decoration to that which was more figurative. Representations of the human form first adorned Cretan pottery in the early ninth century BC, taking more than a century before the practice was widespread on the mainland.

The Dedication of Nikandre was found during excavations on the island of Delos. It was dedicated to Artemis by a woman who hailed from Naxos

CLASSICAL PERIOD

Following the defeat of the second Persian invasion, Athens was the dominant force in Greece in many aspects of life, whether politics, economics or culture. Lasting around 160 years until the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, this golden age saw statuary become notably more realistic in its proportions and form, a movement led by the pioneering Polykleitos of Argos. Bronze rather than hard stone became the dominant material for freestanding sculptures, which wasn't the only convention to be broken during this period. With his c350 BC marble sculpture of Aphrodite of Knidos, Praxiteles presented an undraped woman for the first time.

Realism was also a guiding principle for Greece's vase painters in the Classical period. With the popular red-figure technique, human representations were increasingly more faithful, particularly when rendering motion. Douris, Makron and the anonymous 'Kleophrades Painter' were notable vase painters whose influence and reach were amplified by the expansionism of Alexander the Great, himself a great patron of the arts.

Red-figure pottery, such as this *kylix* (drinking cup), became increasingly popular during the Classical period

HELLENISTIC PERIOD

If you believe Pliny the Elder, the Hellenistic period – the near-300-year-period between Alexander the Great's death and the completion of the Roman conquest of the Greek world – was culturally moribund. Describing the end of the Classical period, he wrote "then art ceased". But there were definite advancements in sculpture and painting. Sculptors developed the portrayal of emotion in their work, while their subjects became more prosaic and everyday, whether common people, children or animals. No longer was sculpture simply concerned with ideals of beauty.

There was also a more egalitarian approach to wall paintings. Previously only found in places of worship or tombs, such artworks now adorned the walls of the homes of important members of Greek society. The creation of mosaics also advanced, with the use of exclusively black and white pebbles superseded by the introduction of coloured ones, along with other materials, such as glass and terracotta. ⊙

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

Macedonian soldiers pictured on a fourth-century BC tomb from Agios Athanasios, near Thessaloniki

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X2

A modern illustration shows prisoners of war being sold into slavery – a common practice throughout ancient Greece

DID YOU KNOW?

RAGS TO RICHES

The fourth-century BC Athenian slave, Pasion, had an unusual life trajectory. Initially owned by a pair of bankers named Antisthenes and Archestratus, Pasion proved so useful that he ended up taking over the bank when his masters retired, and was granted Athenian citizenship.

ABOVE RIGHT: **An ancient funerary relief, dated c430 BC, depicts a young man with his slave**

RIGHT: **Female slaves usually carried out domestic duties such as preparing food or fetching water**

TRAPPED IN SERVITUDE

Treating other humans as property was part and parcel of Greek life, with enslaved people 'used' across virtually all areas of society

Enslaved people were an integral part of society in ancient Greece. Or, rather, the work they were involuntarily charged to undertake was an integral part of society – tasks, duties and jobs that the Greek citizens were broadly loath to carry out themselves.

Servitude was widespread in Greek antiquity. Athens alone was home to an estimated 60,000–80,000 slaves during the fifth and fourth centuries BC, with each household having an average of three or four enslaved people attached to it. Athenian slaves tended to enjoy more freedom than those elsewhere. A typical Athenian slave formed part of his master's household and was initially welcomed with ceremony, offered nuts and fruits, just as a new bride might be. While denied many of the judicial rights possessed by Athens' citizens, Athenian slaves enjoyed a few personal liberties: they could follow their own religious customs and they couldn't be struck by their master.

VARIED FORTUNES

But, as the property of their master, Athenian slaves could still be sold off in the blink of an eye. Even Aristotle, arguably one of Athens' more progressive thinkers, referred to enslaved people as *ktêma empsuchon* – a phrase that roughly translates as 'animate property', or 'property that breathes'.

If they fell on hard times, Athenians could become a slave themselves through a practice called debt enslavement. For instance, if they leased land from a landowner but fell behind on the rent payments, they would become 'enslaved' to that landowner until the debt had been fully paid off. Many enslaved people were foreigners who had been captured during wars; the sons of defeated enemies might also be forced into slavehood, sometimes ending up serving the clients of male brothels. Or enslaved people were simply born into servitude, resigned to a life of comparative captivity as they inherited the family 'trade'.

So-called chattel slaves were those owned by a master who viewed them as his possession, while *dêmosioi* were public slaves owned by the state and who worked for the civic good, whether in non-manual roles, such as clerks, or undertaking more physical work, such as road construction. All, though, were united in being denied civic rights and disqualified from participating in politics.

The most common type of work for enslaved people was within the agricultural sector, although many were otherwise set to task in quarries

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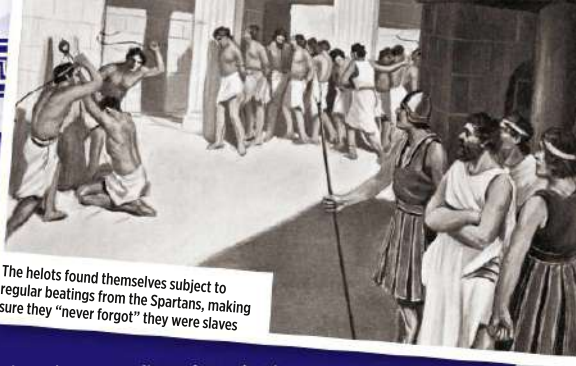


The helots found themselves subject to regular beatings from the Spartans, making sure they "never forgot" they were slaves

HELOTS

Life could be brutal for one particular group of people in ancient Sparta

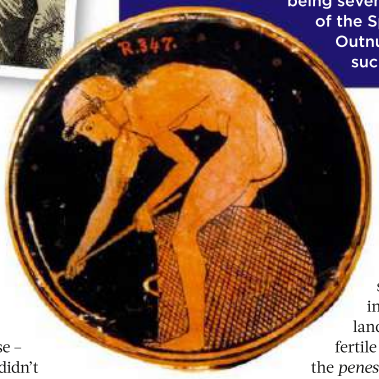
The helots were an enslaved group living in the Spartan regions of Laconia and Messenia. Being collectively owned by the state rather than the possessions of individual masters, to what extent helots were subjugated rather than enslaved is disputed. While the Athenian author and statesman Critias determined that helots were "slaves to the utmost", helots led a relatively stable domestic life, much less likely to see their family members sold off, unlike enslaved people elsewhere in ancient Greece. And they could prosper, too. Thanks to the region's agriculturally rich lands, financially comfortable lives were possible, once their tribute to the state had been paid in the form of a portion of their harvests. In 223 BC, around 6,000 helots coughed up the not-inconsiderable sum of 500 drachmas apiece to buy their freedom.

Helots were widespread and large in number. In the fifth century BC, Herodotus wrote of the helot population being seven times that of the Spartans. Outnumbered to such an extent, it was incumbent of the Spartans, for their own self-preservation, to keep the helots under control and to quell the merest sniff of rebellion. Plutarch wrote that the Spartans treated them "harshly and cruelly", while Thucydides observed that "most Spartan institutions have always been designed with a view to security against the helots". Also, as Myron of Priene noted, the helots were subject to "a stipulated number of beatings every year, regardless of any wrongdoing, so that they never forgot they were slaves". Every autumn, the Spartans declared war on the helots, meaning that a proportion of them could be slaughtered without any censure from religious institutions.

This wasn't to say that helot rebellions didn't occur – after all, Aristotle called them "an enemy constantly sitting in wait" – but the Spartan preoccupation with security largely prevailed, thanks to the ways of the *Krypteia*, their secret police. And, of course, the Spartans took full advantage of the helot population when filling the ranks of their troops for wars against other states.

and mines. Domestic slaves arguably had less physically demanding existences; some would accompany their masters on their travels, perhaps even being becoming informal confidantes. Enslaved people might also work in professional trades, perhaps as artisans or shopkeepers or bankers. These – known as *chôris oikountes* – didn't actually live under their masters' roofs, but did work on their behalf, and paid them a commission. Their lives would, unsurprisingly, not be as harsh as those forced into heavy manual labour every day.

So, just as there was great variety in the nature of the work undertaken, when it came to status, being an enslaved person in ancient Greece was by no means a uniform experience either; there was no neat slave/non-slave binary distinction. Several shades of grey existed. For instance, enslaved people in Sparta were known as helots (*see box, above*), a group that, at least in the eyes of the scholar Pollux, occupied a status "between free men and slaves". In the region of Thessaly, the closest equivalent to helots were *penestae* who, like their Spartan counterparts, were tied to the land they inhabited. While their status was similar to serfs in later medieval times, the land of Thessaly was notably fertile and uncrowded, ensuring the *penestae* could comfortably pay the proportion of their produce due to their masters. The third-century BC writer Archemachus even claimed that "many of them are richer than their masters".



An example of traditional Greek red-figure pottery, depicting an enslaved person working in a mine

FINDING A WAY OUT

Enslaved people who lived and largely worked independently of their masters were those least likely to feel the iron rod of discipline. Athenian slaves, too, could be physically punished and even tortured, and enslaved people elsewhere were also subject to beatings. As the statesman and intellectual Demosthenes argued, "the body of a slave is made responsible for all his misdeeds, whereas corporal punishment is the last penalty to inflict on a free man".

While most enslaved people remained in servitude until death, it was possible to be freed by a master – the process of manumission, or enfranchisement. In all but the most benevolent of cases, an enslaved person effectively had to buy their way to freedom for this to happen, paying their master a sum that at least equated to their value were they to be sold off to a new master. If the slave had sufficient savings to be able to do this, their emancipation was likely to be total, meaning they couldn't be enslaved again at any point in the future.

But if, as was distinctly likely, the enslaved person didn't have access to sufficient funds, they might request a so-called 'friendly' loan from their master. In these circumstances, it was probable that they would still have to fulfil particular obligations to their former master until the loan had been repaid. That is, emancipation would only be partial. Completely escaping the control of a master was an ambition seldom realised.

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH

Ancient Greece saw the birth of modern medicine, as physicians began to seek a more scientific approach

Early Greek medicine borrowed numerous ideas from ancient Egypt, with many people seeking supernatural explanations for their ailments, such as curses and the judgment of the gods. If someone became unwell, they would typically end up in an *asclepeion* – a temple dedicated to the god of medicine, Asclepius. The patient would sleep there and hope to be visited by Asclepius overnight, who would tell them their cure.

Upon waking the next day, the patient would report their dreams to priests, who would prescribe them a treatment – usually based on prayer, exercise, bathing and herbal remedies. If they were cured, the grateful worshippers would leave behind a model of their affected body part in the temple as an offering of thanks.

However, a desire to seek more pragmatic explanations for people's ailments grew as time went on. One of the most notable physicians to advocate science and reason was Hippocrates (c460–c375 BC), who helped further the theory of the four humours (*see box on opposite page*), and was one of the first doctors to accurately describe conditions such as epilepsy. Whereas some people believed that the disorder was a result of demonic possession, the Kos-born physician instead determined that the cause lay inside the human brain.

Thanks to the work of Hippocrates and his adherents down the generations, distinctions now also began to be made between acute (short and sudden) and chronic (long-lasting) diseases, while emphasising the importance of observation. Physicians would also regularly take checks of their patient's progressing symptoms, as well as their pulse, temperature and excretions.

In addition, the Hippocratic school pioneered important new techniques: a collection of writings attributed to the physician's followers (known as the *Hippocratic Corpus*) features the earliest known reference to an endoscopy using a rectal speculum.

PROFESSIONAL METHODS

As medicine was still a developing field, physicians were often viewed with suspicion. Hippocrates, however, developed a code of ethics that helped turn medicine into a respected profession, and ensured that physicians came to be seen as important members of society. The so-called 'Hippocratic Oath' laid out basic ground rules for a doctor's bedside manner, as well as text on the importance of honesty, compassion, confidentiality, cleanliness, and careful noting of a patient's symptoms (which could then be used by other physicians). Indeed, more than 2,300 years after Hippocrates' death, much of the oath still resonates today:

I swear by Apollo the physician, and Asclepius, and Hygieia and Panacea and all the gods and goddesses as my witnesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this contract... I will use those dietary regimens which will benefit my patients according to my greatest ability and judgment, and I will do no harm or injustice to them... Into whatever homes I go, I will enter them for the benefit of the sick, avoiding any voluntary act of impropriety or corruption, including the seduction of women or men, whether they are free men or slaves.

Whatever I see or hear in the lives of my patients, whether in connection with my professional practice or not, which ought not to be spoken of outside,

ABOVE LEFT: **An image of Hippocrates from the 14th century. The Greek physician has been dubbed the 'Father of Medicine'**

ABOVE RIGHT: **The Hippocratic Oath still influences the conduct of doctors today**

A fifth-century BC marble relief shows a Greek physician treating a woman

GETTY IMAGES X6

A 14th-century depiction of trepanation – a treatment also practised in ancient Greece

I will keep secret, as considering all such things to be private.

So long as I maintain this Oath faithfully and without corruption, may it be granted to me to partake of life fully and the practice of my art, gaining the respect of all men for all time. However, should I transgress this Oath and violate it, may the opposite be my fate.

While Hippocrates is perhaps the most famous of the ancient Greek physicians, he certainly wasn't the only doctor to have had an important impact on medical thinking. Herophilus (c330–c280 BC), for instance, is believed to have been one of the first to perform human dissections during a time when a ban on the practice (for religious reasons) was temporarily lifted in Alexandria. Through his careful studies of the body, Herophilus deduced that veins only carried blood (it was previously thought they also carried a mixture of water and air), and devised a method for measuring the pulse.

A FERTILE IMAGINATION

Despite their pioneering ideas, the ancient Greeks still had some unusual beliefs when it came to conditions like pregnancy, including the notion that a baby's gender could be determined through the complexion of the mother – the appearance of freckles was thought to be a sign that she was carrying a girl, while a clear complexion indicated that a boy was due instead. Meanwhile, if a couple wanted to increase the likelihood of having a boy, the man could tie up his left testicle before intercourse; according to contemporary thinking, the right testicle was believed to be 'superior' and would therefore conceive a stronger (and more desirable) male heir.

Another medical technique that the ancient Greeks utilised was trepanation – drilling a hole into the skull. While earlier civilisations may have adopted the procedure to allow evil spirits to escape, it's possible that Greek physicians had other ideas as to the benefits of the procedure. According to some historians, trepanation may have been used as a way of treating head fractures, on the basis that recovery was more likely if pieces of dead bone could be removed before infection set in.

Regardless of how strange some of their methods may seem today, however, the work of ancient Greek physicians had an undeniable impact on the western world. The teachings of ancient Greece were adopted by ancient Rome, and – as the Roman empire expanded – those ideas spread further afield. Together, they would influence medicine for many centuries to come.

WORDS: EMMA SLATTERY WILLIAMS

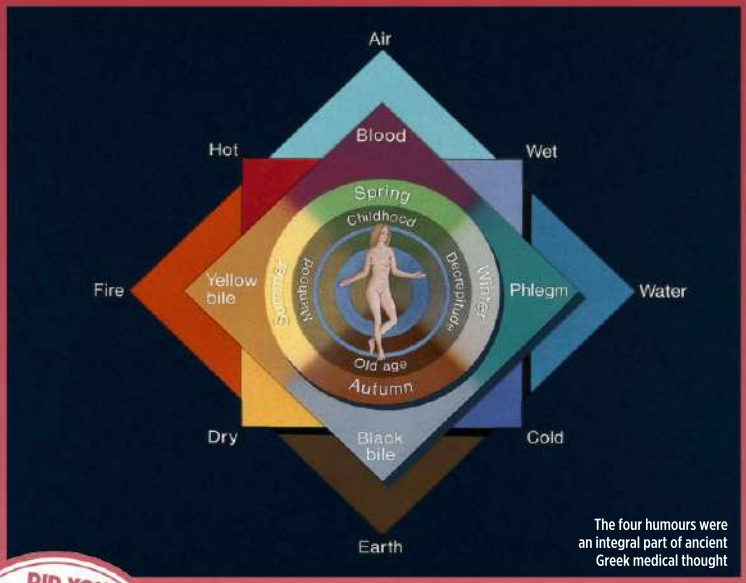
THE FOUR HUMOURS

While it seems bizarre through a modern lens, one medical concept popularised by the ancient Greeks would dominate for centuries

Humourism, or the theory of the four humours, was a prevalent concept in ancient Greece. Though the theory is believed to have originated much earlier, Hippocrates is often credited with refining and popularising it. The core belief was that the human body was made up of four fluids – blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm – and that these corresponded with the four elements of earth, fire, wind and water. If any of these became imbalanced, you could become ill.

The humours were also believed to be connected with temperature and weather. Blood was associated with moisture and warmth; if you suffered from redness, perspiration and swelling, you were said to have too much blood in your body. To solve the problem, doctors would practise bloodletting, achieved by cutting the skin or by using leeches. Fainting was usually seen as a sign that the treatment was working, but death could occur if too much blood was drained.

The four humours theory did not die out with the ancient Greeks. In fact, humourism would remain part of western medicine until as late as the 19th century, when germ theory (the idea that pathogens cause disease) and other medical discoveries took hold.

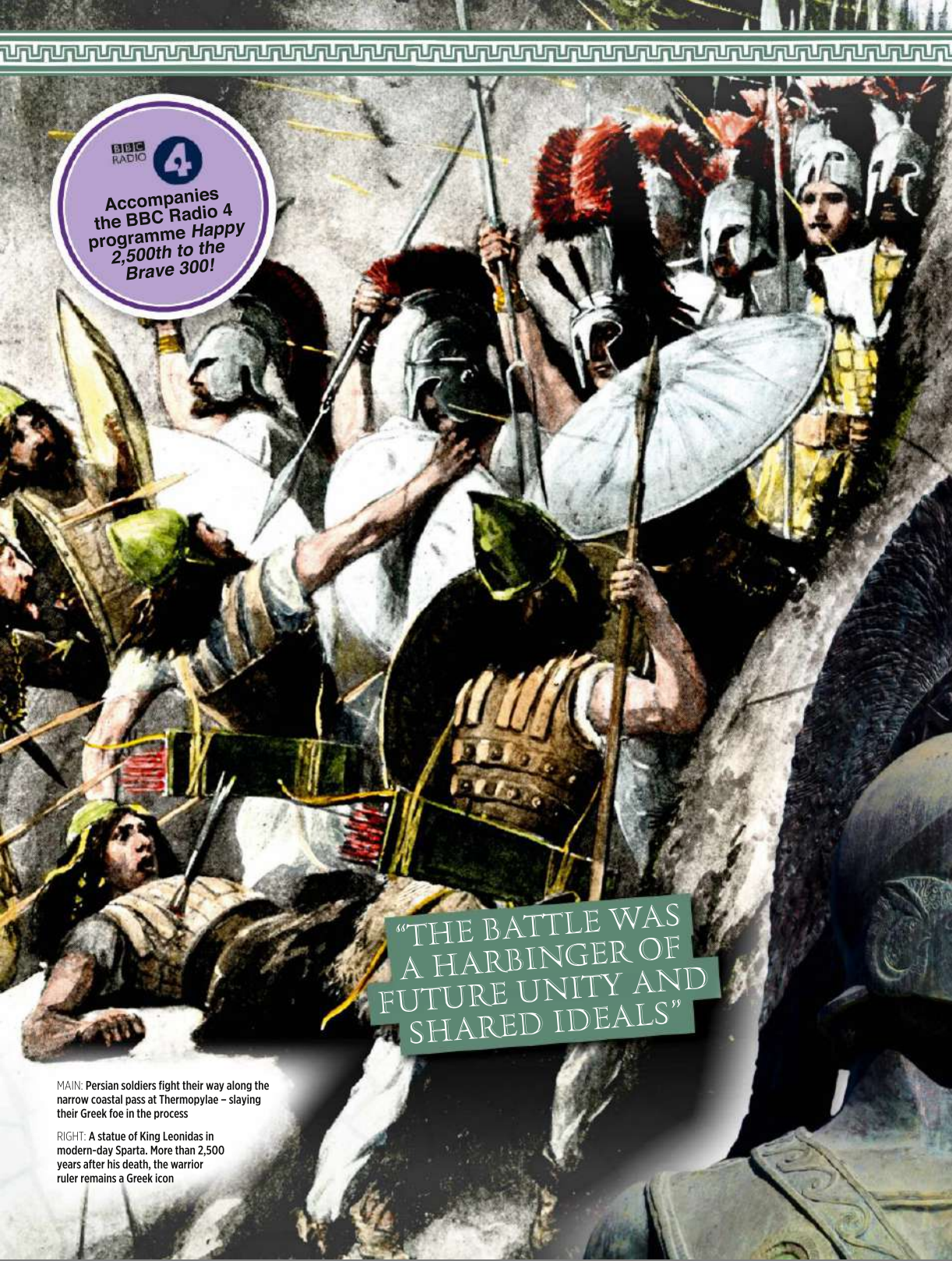


The four humours were an integral part of ancient Greek medical thought

DID YOU KNOW?

ALL GREEK TO ME

The image of the Rod of Asclepius – a serpent-entwined staff – is still used as a symbol for healthcare and healing across the globe. It famously appears on the flag of the World Health Organization.


BBC RADIO 4
Accompanies the BBC Radio 4 programme Happy 2,500th to the Brave 300!
"THE BATTLE WAS A HARBINGER OF FUTURE UNITY AND SHARED IDEALS"

MAIN: **Persian soldiers fight their way along the narrow coastal pass at Thermopylae – slaying their Greek foe in the process**

RIGHT: **A statue of King Leonidas in modern-day Sparta. More than 2,500 years after his death, the warrior ruler remains a Greek icon**

LEONIDAS AND THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

It was a spectacular defeat – but ancient Greece's greatest clash would go on to symbolise heroism for generations to come

The battle of Thermopylae holds a significant place in Greek history.

Although events were grave for the country's troops, and it was a defeat that was almost inevitable, the battle was also a harbinger of future unity, of shared ideals, and of a growing devotion to a bigger cause.

In 490 BC, the first Persian invasion of Greece had come to an end following the invaders' defeat at the battle of Marathon, a loss that brought the expansionist ambitions of Darius the Great to a close. After his death in 486 BC, Xerxes I – not the eldest of Darius' sons but the one he had chosen to succeed him – resurrected these plans to conquer Greece. During the first six years of his rule, Xerxes assembled a huge military force, both in terms of army and naval manpower, and in 480 BC, he launched a second invasion, aiming to succeed where his father had failed 10 years earlier.

Fearful of such an invasion, the previous year a congress had been held at which, in the face of this seemingly inevitable Persian aggression, around 30 Greek city-states agreed to form an alliance, led by King Leonidas I of Sparta. The Spartans and the Athenians were prime movers of this union and took charge of the combined military forces; the Spartans controlled the army, while the navy – if not officially – was effectively run by the prominent Athenian politician Themistocles.

It was Themistocles who masterminded the allies' key plan of defence. He suggested that the Greeks' combined land forces should aim to block the Persians' progress at the coastal pass of Thermopylae. At the same time, his ships would attempt to contain the invading advance in the tight Straits of Artemisium. Accordingly, the 7,000-strong Greek army marched north towards Thermopylae.

CUT TO RIBBONS

Subsequent retellings of the events at Thermopylae make frequent reference to the tight dimensions of the east/west pass, a route apparently so narrow that it could only accommodate a single cart or chariot at one time. The pass was no more than 15 metres wide, even in the middle, and largely consisted of treacherous marshland, across which a narrow pass offered the only means of progress. The Malian Gulf was to the north and a seemingly insurmountable hill to the south. The topography certainly favoured the Greeks, who were further aided by the pass being protected by a series of gates erected the previous century by the Phocians as a means of ▶

ABOVE: **Persia's first invasion of Greece had come to an end at Marathon in 490 BC** RIGHT: **Politician Themistocles organised the main defence strategy at Salamis**

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X2

BIG NUMBERS

Vital statistics from one of the most iconic battles of the ancient world...

3 MILLION

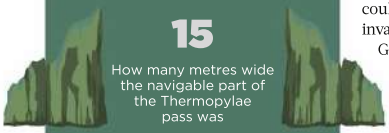
The size, in square kilometres, of the Persian empire at the time of its second invasion of Greece in 480 BC

5,283,220

The number of Persian soldiers and support personnel at the battle, as calculated by the contemporary writer Herodotus. The more realistic figure is closer to 200,000 soldiers

15

How many metres wide the navigable part of the Thermopylae pass was



20,000

The estimated number of Persian soldiers killed in the three days of fighting

2,000

The estimated number of Greek soldiers killed in the three days of fighting

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X3, BBC X1

defence. (Thermopylae literally means 'hot gates', a name that also referenced the nearby hot springs.)

When they arrived at Thermopylae, it was clear that the Persians vastly outnumbered the allied defence. That said, their forces were nothing close to the several million soldiers claimed by the contemporary writer Herodotus. More realistic estimates suggest the invaders were around 200,000 in number, a force that still dwarfed that of the Greek allies.

Despite their size, it wasn't until the fourth day after their arrival – in either August or September 480 BC – that the Persians began their assault on the blockade. This first attack came in the form of a barrage of arrows fired by 5,000 archers, which the Greeks comfortably defended; the historian Diodorus wrote about "the great size of their shields". Then came the first frontal attack, launched by a wave of around 10,000 men. It was far from successful. Thanks to their superior weaponry, the Greeks suffered very few casualties while the Persians were, in the words of the chronicler Ctesias, "cut to ribbons". Xerxes responded by sending in his elite force, the 10,000-strong Immortals. They fared no better.

A SECRET PATHWAY

On the second day of hostilities, Xerxes sent in the infantry. The belief was that, as the fighting continued, his plentiful personnel would ultimately come to bear as he launched further waves of attacks. As Herodotus wrote, "they joined battle, supposing that their enemies, being so few, were now disabled by wounds and could no longer resist". But, again, the invaders were unable to penetrate the Greeks' defences. Xerxes withdrew his troops from the frontline, unsure and confused as to which tactic to employ next.

Then a godsend came his way when a local man, Ephialtes, fed him a morsel of insider information. It would be a morsel that abruptly changed the direction of the battle. Ephialtes revealed the existence of a path leading over the adjacent mountain, one only known and used by local shepherds, that would bypass the stand-off. The motivation for Ephialtes was a potentially sizeable reward from the Persian king. After all, this was valuable intelligence: using this path would give Xerxes, already in possession of that numerical advantage, a strategic edge too.

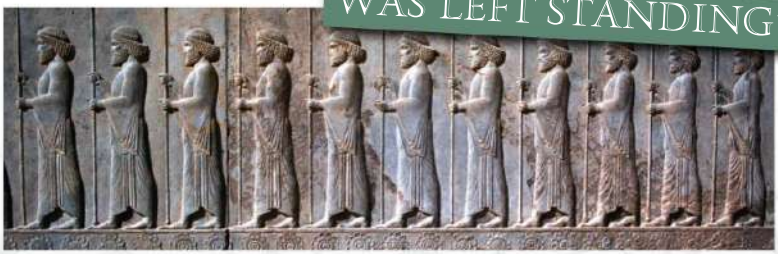
The local man's tip-off proved fatal for a couple of thousand allied Greek troops. On the evening of the battle's second day, Xerxes instructed his commander Hydarnes to take 10,000 Immortals on this lesser-used path, along the ridge of the tree-covered Mount Anopaea and down towards the Malian Gulf that lay beyond Thermopylae.

At daybreak the following morning, Phocian guards were alerted to the Persians' presence by a rustling in the trees. As Herodotus wrote, "the Phocians jumped up and began to put on their weapons, and in a moment the barbarians were there". With the secret path captured, the Persians marched on in their plan to surround the Greeks. Hearing that the Phocians had failed to keep the path secure, Leonidas swiftly called a council of war. While certain factions among the allies favoured a

ABOVE: **A carving depicting the Persian king Xerxes I. While his troops were victorious at Thermopylae, his invasion of Greece would prove ultimately unsuccessful**

ABOVE RIGHT: **A still from Zack Snyder's 2006 film, *300*. The Hollywood blockbuster has been one of many efforts to bring the Spartans' heroics to the big screen**

"THE ARCHERS ENSURED THAT NOT A SINGLE GREEK WAS LEFT STANDING"



A relief showing some of Persia's 'Immortals' – an elite royal guard that, according to Herodotus, numbered precisely 10,000 men

A tablet at the battle site commemorates Leonidas and his resilient Spartans

retreat, he announced that he and his 300 Spartans would remain firmly in place.

When word came through that the Greek rear guard had been encircled, Leonidas allowed his allies to leave if so desired. Many accepted the invitation and fled, but 2,000 soldiers held their positions. Further withdrawals followed – either voluntarily or under instruction from Leonidas – leaving 700 Thespians, 400 Thebans and those 300 Spartans to fight to the death.

SPARTAN VALOUR

Ten thousand Persian light infantrymen and cavalry charged at the Greek troops who left their position on the narrow pass to meet their attackers head-on. Wide-scale loss of life was inevitable, but as they met their certain fate, they sought to take as many Persian casualties as possible. Two of Xerxes' brothers were killed in the fighting, as was Leonidas himself, the victim of an arrow. The Persian archers did their best to ensure that not a single Greek was left standing; the Thebans abandoned the fight at the end and are said to have surrendered.

After three days of fighting, the allies had lost around 2,000 men. Persian casualties were much heavier – perhaps as high as 20,000 – but Xerxes' forces had won the battle, unlocking the pass at Thermopylae and allowing his ambitions of conquering Greece to advance. The Persians then marched on Athens, which they razed to the ground, before being defeated at the battle of Salamis, a naval skirmish which ultimately resulted in Xerxes' retreat back to Asia. The second Persian invasion of Greece had lasted even less time than the original one.

Arguably, the most enduring legacy of the battle of Thermopylae was the cultivation of the cult of Spartan valour. The honourable notion of surrendering yourself for the greater common good had firmly taken hold. As historian Paul Cartledge writes, the resistance undertaken at Thermopylae has "resonated indeed throughout the entire western cultural tradition as a deed emblematic of the peculiar Greek and Spartan qualities of reasoned devotion to, and self-sacrifice in the name of, a higher collective cause". Leonidas was its author.

WORDS: NIGE TASSELL

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4

Happy 2,500th to the Brave 300! is scheduled to air on BBC Radio 4 on 30 August

GET HOOKED

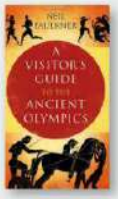
If we've whetted your appetite for ancient Greece, why not explore the topic further with our pick of books, films and podcasts

BOOKS

Ancient Greece: A Very Short Introduction

By Prof Paul Cartledge (OUP, 2011)

Covering everything from politics, trade and travel to slavery, gender, religion and philosophy, Professor Paul Cartledge uses the history of 11 major Greek cities to illuminate the most important and informative themes in ancient Greek history.



A Visitor's Guide to the Ancient Olympics

By Dr Neil Faulkner (Yale University Press, 2012)

What was it like to attend the Olympics in 388 BC? Would the experience resemble Olympic festivals as we celebrate them today? Dr Neil Faulkner offers a complete tour of the Olympic site exactly as athletes and spectators found it – evoking the sights, sounds and smells of ancient Olympia.

Pandora's Jar: Women in the Greek Myths

By Natalie Haynes (Picador, 2020)

Taking Pandora and her jar as a starting point, broadcaster, writer and classicist Natalie Haynes puts the women of the Greek myths – from Hera, Athena and Artemis, to Clytemnestra, Jocasta, Eurydice and Penelope – on equal footing with the menfolk whose stories are more commonly known.

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4

▶ **Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics** *(BBC Radio 4):* Natalie Haynes takes a fresh look at the ancient world, creating stand-up routines about figures from ancient Greece and Rome. Listen at *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b077x8pc*

History Extra

▶ **For podcasts, features, quizzes, interviews and more on ancient Greece, visit our website: *historyextra.com/period/ancient-greece***

WATCH

300 (2006)

(Now streaming on various platforms)

This graphic retelling of the battle of Thermopylae sees Sparta's King Leonidas lead an alliance of Greek forces against the mighty Persian army of King Xerxes I.

Ancient Greece: The Greatest Show on Earth (2013)

(BBC Four, now streaming on Amazon Prime)

Professor Michael Scott explores the history and influence of Athenian theatre in this three-part series, including the role of the Romans in preserving Greek drama.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING H-BOMB PAPER

Roger Hermiston reveals how one man's mishap on a train to Washington DC sparked a wild goose chase and left the United States facing a Cold War catastrophe

GETTY IMAGES

On the morning of Wednesday 7 January 1953, atomic physicist John Archibald Wheeler stood on his tiptoes on the lavatory seat of a Pullman sleeper train to Washington DC and peered over into the next door cubicle at another man doing his business.

Wheeler might well have asked himself what on earth he was doing. A happily married man, he risked being caught and labelled a sexual deviant. His prestigious position at Princeton, and his standing at the very top of the American scientific community, would surely be destroyed by the scandal that would ensue.

But at the moment of his Peeping Tom act, Wheeler had no thought for any of those consequences. His focus was not on the man sat on the toilet seat below, but on the wall next to him, where a manila envelope was tucked behind the pipes of the lavatory system. It contained nothing less than the biggest secret on the planet – and Wheeler *had* to get it back.

The absent-minded scientist had left it there on his visit to that cubicle just a few minutes earlier. In the envelope was a six-page document with details of the history of the making of the H-bomb – the new terrifying weapon of mass destruction that only America possessed – and enough up to date technical detail to hugely excite a foreign power. Had he, Wheeler, thought, been burgled by a Soviet agent?

When he saw the man had finished, Wheeler darted in and grabbed the manila envelope. Greatly relieved, he returned to his berth and began packing up his suitcase to go. Everything completed, he pulled out the manila envelope for a final double-check on the H-bomb document. To his complete horror, the envelope only contained another, more mundane document – the H-bomb paper had vanished.

A desperate search of his berth and the entire Pullman sleeping car, followed by a frantic tour of Washington's Union Station rooms and restaurants to try and identify any of his fellow passengers, proved fruitless. An utterly dejected Wheeler had no alternative but to report his loss to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy (JCAE), three of whose members rushed down to the station to add fresh eyes to the search. But eventually, soon after midday, JCAE executive director William Borden bowed to the inevitable and picked up the phone to the FBI's Washington office.

In the five weeks that followed, Special Agent Charles Lyons, leading the investigation, was able to identify and rule out as suspects five men who had taken neighbouring berths on the Pullman train Wheeler had travelled in from Philadelphia. But there remained some worrying gaps in his knowledge.

Firstly, Lyons was unable to track down an "ordinary, plainly dressed" couple, 30 to 40 years old, and their small child, who had bought a last-minute ticket from the conductor and taken up the lower and upper bunks in berth No 1.

Even more tantalising was his failure to find the occupant of lower berth No 8, diagonally opposite Wheeler. Lyons had this individual's ticket – a last-minute one, bought over the counter in Philadelphia – but frustratingly, the name written on the railroad company's seating chart could not be identified, despite being pored over in the FBI laboratory in Chicago. This mystery man – or woman – was something like 'Magenbright', 'Wagenbright', or 'Wagenknight' – but no one could be sure which.

FEAR AND PARANOIA

The loss of the H-bomb document could not have come at a more critical time in the Cold War – and at a more febrile moment in American history. The war in Korea, now two-and-a-half years old, showed no signs of ending. An atmosphere of worry, even paranoia about communists at the heart of the government was being stoked by the witchfinder-in-chief, Joe McCarthy.

Then there were the atomic spies. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the latest of these, had been tried, convicted and sentenced to death. Since the end of December 1952, the couple's supporters had been holding a continuous picket outside the White House, where they called on President Harry S Truman to grant the couple clemency before leaving office later that month.

Now came this disappearance, which could have come right out of the pages of a spy thriller – perhaps from the pen of someone like Ian Fleming, who in 1953 was about to introduce James Bond to the world in *Casino Royale*.

Forty-one-year-old John Wheeler ('Johnny' as he was known to friends) had been a key figure in the wartime Manhattan Project which developed the first atom bomb, and was currently head of Project Matterhorn B, America's H-bomb project based at Princeton University, where he had been professor of physics since 1938.

Wheeler had taken the overnight train to Washington DC to meet with representatives from the US Naval Research Laboratory about an unrelated project, but decided that he would also use his time in the capital to deliver his comments regarding the H-bomb paper to the JCAE by hand. Settling down in his berth, lower No 9, on the night of ▶

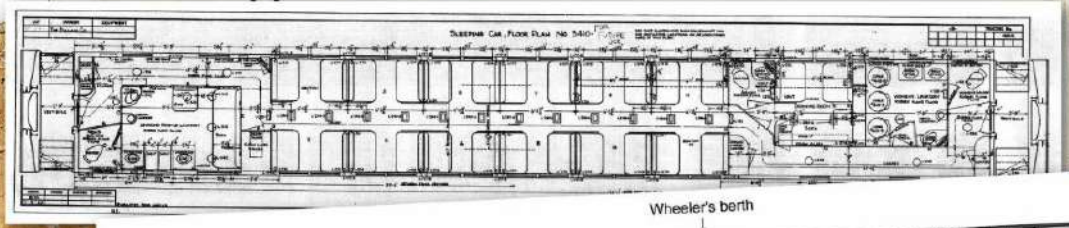
"The manila envelope contained nothing less than the biggest secret on the planet"

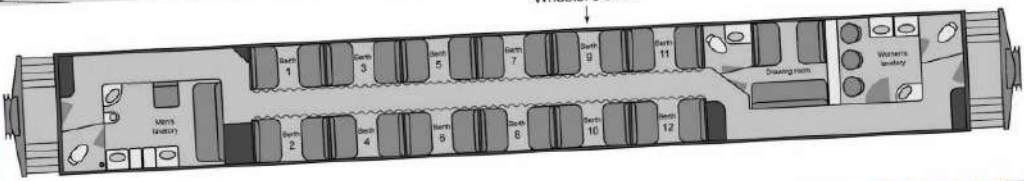
TOP LEFT: **John Wheeler was head of the American H-bomb project at Princeton University when he lost crucial paperwork on a train to Washington DC**

TOP RIGHT: **William Borden, executive director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, had the unenviable task of reporting Wheeler's mishap to the FBI**

BOTTOM: **New York couple Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sent to the electric chair in June 1953 after being convicted of espionage**

NIELS BOHR LIBRARY & ARCHIVES, X1; NEWBERRY LIBRARY X1; ALEX WELLERSTEIN X1; GETTY IMAGES X2





ABOVE: The Pullman Company's original schematic diagram of the sleeper car in which John Wheeler stayed (*top*), along with a more recent drawing identifying his berth

RIGHT: The note that landed on the desk of the FBI's associate director, Clyde Tolson, describing the exact circumstances in which the crucial document went astray

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Tolson

FROM : L. B. Nichols

DATE: January 7, 1953

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 1/29/07 BY 60309 uc/tam/ksr/kg

SUBJECT: Dr. JOHN WHEELER
Princeton University
Disappearance of Secret Document
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy

William Borden, Staff Director of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, called. He stated that some time ago the Joint Committee sent Dr. John Wheeler of Princeton University, whom he described as one of the top atomic energy scientists who had been intimately associated with the program from its inception and who was constantly used by the Committee on a consultant basis, a document classified as secret by the Joint Committee. This document was a summary, from a critical viewpoint, on how the Atomic Energy program stands and attached to it were two pages of an abstract and history of the old MED program.

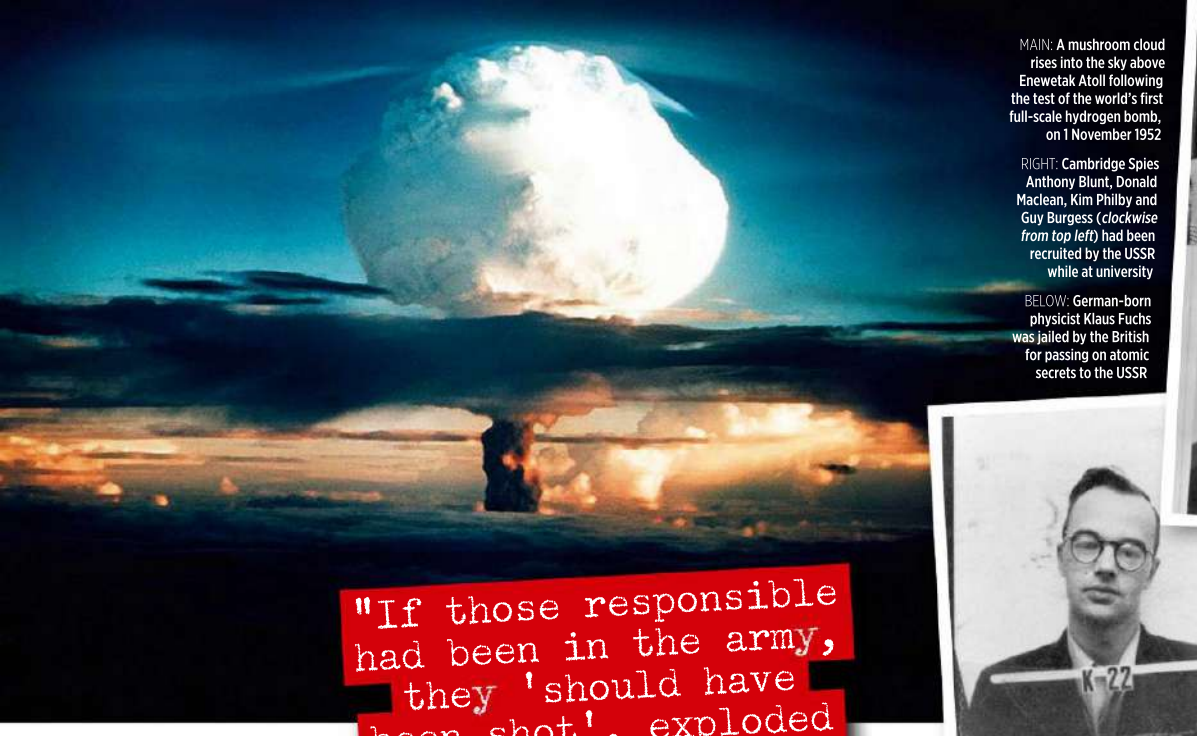
Last night Wheeler got on a Pullman to come to Washington. He read the document in his lower berth, placed it in a manilla envelope. This morning, when he woke up, he carried the envelope to the washroom. He then carried it into the toilet and placed it alongside of him. He left the toilet and returned to his berth and realized that he had left the envelope in the toilet. He went back to the washroom. The toilet was occupied. He climbed up and looked over the partition. A man was standing in the toilet but apparently the envelope had not been touched. After the man left the toilet Dr. Wheeler retrieved the envelope and then later, after he got off the train, examined the envelope and the secret document was missing.

Dr. Wheeler searched the berth of the Pullman car, went to the lost and found department at Union Station, then went to the offices of the Joint Committee. All of his luggage was searched with negative results. John Walker and former Agent Frank Cotter located the Pullman car in the yards and again searched it with negative results. The conductor and the porter had already gone on to Richmond. They have the details of this, along with a list of those who occupied this particular car.

Borden was considerably concerned. He stated the paper was not insignificant and he did not desire to go into details over the telephone. He asked specifically whether Wheeler had any indication that anybody had attempted to steal the paper and Wheeler stated he did not. Borden stated that whoever got the paper would have considerable information.

cc: Mr. Ladd
cc: Mr. Belmont

56 DEC 17 1953 RECORDED - 115 INDEXED - 115 JAN 13 1953



MAIN: A mushroom cloud rises into the sky above Enewetak Atoll following the test of the world's first full-scale hydrogen bomb, on 1 November 1952

RIGHT: Cambridge Spies Anthony Blunt, Donald Maclean, Kim Philby and Guy Burgess (*clockwise from top left*) had been recruited by the USSR while at university

BELOW: German-born physicist Klaus Fuchs was jailed by the British for passing on atomic secrets to the USSR

"If those responsible had been in the army, they 'should have been shot', exploded the president"

◀ Tuesday 6 January, he had pulled out the document to read and make notes on before he went to sleep.

What he read that night remains highly classified, even today. But we can glean something of what it said from Wheeler's interview with the FBI. The document confirmed that the US was on its way to a successful thermonuclear weapon (it had tested a rough and ready prototype, code-named 'Ivy Mike', in November 1952). It also revealed that there were several varieties of the thermonuclear weapon considered to be available for practical use.

Wheeler told his inquisitors that the top-secret document also revealed technical details about the making of the 'super' fusion bomb – that "Lithium-6 was useful, that compression was useful, and that radiation heating provided a way to get that compression".

The physicist believed that mention of Lithium-6 as a vital ingredient would have aroused the interest of the Kremlin. But he told FBI investigators that the "qualitative idea of radiation implosion... is the most important revelation" – and could be crucial information for Soviet atomic scientists.

Wheeler had a record of carelessness with official documents, but no one seriously believed he was a Soviet spy. As Agent Lyons pursued the case, he first accounted for the movements of all Soviet diplomatic personnel on the morning of 7 January. He then initiated a probe into what he described as a "delegation of radicals" heading for the capital on Wheeler's train.

This was a group bound for the White House where they would carry placards urging the president to commute the death sentence of the Rosenbergs. FBI agents shot numerous still photographs and reels of film of this protest, and made Wheeler study it to see if he recognised any of the individuals from his train journey on 6 and 7 January. But the scientist was unable to provide a positive identification, and that trail went cold.

EISENHOWER'S BURDEN

The H-bomb paper could simply have slid away from Wheeler's grasp as he dropped off to sleep on that Tuesday night, somehow vanishing into the structure, equipment or bedding of the Pullman.

But when the newly elected President Dwight Eisenhower had the task of revealing the paper's disappearance to his National Security Council a month later, most of them were convinced it was the work of the Soviets – none more so than Vice-President Richard Nixon, who urged the FBI to carry out a complete check on each and every member of the JCAE. Eisenhower asked his deputy to liaise with FBI director J Edgar Hoover about taking into 'custody' all the committee's files – before any more papers were lost.

Eisenhower's mood that day was a mixture of deep anxiety and anger that such a calamity should happen so soon on his watch. Rarely had a president of the United States laid bare his feelings so starkly before his closest colleagues. He frankly confessed that he was "frightened", and had no idea how to proceed. He expressed bewilderment that the item in Wheeler's possession had been erroneously labelled as 'Secret' rather than 'Top Secret', and sent merely by registered mail to a 'college professor' in Princeton rather than being escorted to him by armed guard.

If those responsible for this disastrous breach of security – the staff of the JCAE – had been in the army, they "should have been shot", exploded the president. The JCAE would soon have a new chairman and a new set-up, but, as Eisenhower bemoaned, that would simply be to "lock the barn door after the horse had been stolen".

There was no serious thought given to briefing the British about the loss. As more and more evidence was coming to light about the Cambridge Spies (the British university students recruited by the Soviets in the 1930s), and with the treachery of Klaus Fuchs (the German-born British scientist who had passed on A-Bomb secrets) still raw, there was little collaboration on the nuclear front between Washington and London. Eisenhower had been unimpressed when he had met ageing prime minister

GETTY IMAGES X4, ALAMY X3

Winston Churchill in January, reflecting he was "as charming and interesting as ever – but definitely showing the effects of the passing years".

A CONTINUING MYSTERY

In the end, after FBI agents all over the eastern side of the United States had interviewed hundreds of people and supervised the search of miles and miles of railway track and dozens upon dozens of railway carriages, they were none the wiser. The hunt petered out and Eisenhower had more immediate day-to-day preoccupations, primarily trying to end the war in Korea.

Maybe the H-bomb paper will turn up one day in one of Putin's files in the Kremlin. What is a fact is that only seven months later, in August 1953, the Soviet Union drew level with the US when it tested its own prototype H-bomb on the steppe in the northeast Kazakhstan.

As for 'Johnny' Wheeler, he escaped with a dressing-down from Gordon Dean, chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee: he was too valuable a member of the H-bomb project to be fired. Years later, musing about the incident in his memoirs, Wheeler wrote: "It is interesting, even now, to wonder whether my document was purloined by a Soviet agent. It could hardly have vanished into thin air."

ROGER HERMISTON is a writer and journalist. His latest book is *Two Minutes to Midnight: 1953 – The Year of Living Dangerously* (Biteback Publishing, 2021)

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4 An episode of *Cold War: Stories from the Big Freeze* focuses on the H-bomb: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07jyw88*

HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS MISSING DOCUMENTS (AND ONE THAT WAS FOUND)

The stories of four other items that have proved frustratingly elusive...

THE 'Q' GOSPEL

◀ Also known as the *logia*, the 'Q' Gospel is a (hypothetical) Greek-language document that many biblical scholars nevertheless believe to have been in circulation at the time of the Synoptic Gospels – Mark, Matthew and Luke – between 65 and 95 AD. The tantalising theory goes that elements of 'Q' surface in Mark and Luke, but a great, untapped wealth of Jesus's teachings remain to be discovered in the original document.

THE MAYA CODICES

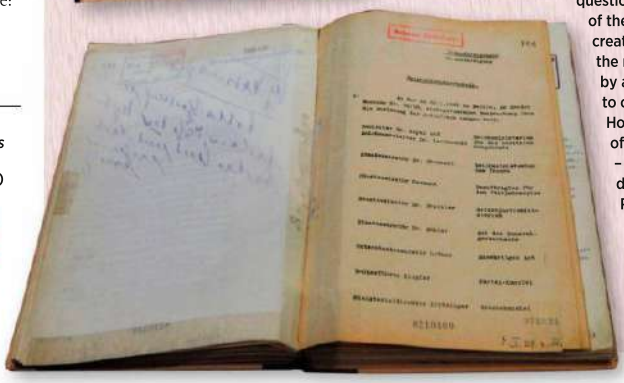
▶ The Maya civilisation (which reached its peak in the sixth century AD) featured the first complex societies, with cities, monumental architecture, writing and calendrical systems. Scribes recorded the story on codices – folding books made from tree bark. Only four of the codices survive today, with most destroyed by Spanish conquistadors and priests. But could others be hidden in tombs across southern Mexico and northern Central America?

CONFUCIUS' SIXTH CLASSIC

◀ Among the great Chinese philosopher's legacy is his 'Five Classics': texts covering poetry, rhetoric, ancient rites, history and divination. But Confucius allegedly wrote a sixth text, on music, which is feared to have disappeared during the 'Burning of Books and Burying of Scholars' – a purge of 'subversive' works by Emperor Qin Shi Huang in the third century BC.

THE WANNSEE PROTOCOL

◀ An item that, thankfully, was found. The Wannsee Protocol comprised the minutes of a meeting held by 15 high-ranking Nazi Party and German government officials at a villa on Lake Wannsee, Berlin, in 1942, to draw up plans for the "final solution of the Jewish question". Thirty copies of the document were created in total, with the majority destroyed by attendees in order to cover their tracks. However, one Nazi official – Martin Luther – kept his. It was discovered in 1947 by Robert Kempner, a US lawyer involved in the Nuremberg Trials, and used to secure convictions against war criminals.



WHEN MARY MET PHILIP

A TUDOR QUEEN IN LOVE

It should have been happily ever after for Mary I. But, writes **Amy Licence**, their union was doomed from the start

Philip of Spain and Mary I were married from 1554 until her death in 1558. Throughout, the disparity in their status proved a point of contention

MAIN: With his full beard and 'toned calves', Philip's appearance delighted Mary

BELOW: A portrait of Mary I from 1554, the year she wed Philip of Spain

Mary I had been waiting almost her entire life for her wedding day. At 38, she was an old bride by contemporary standards, but as morning arrived on 23 July 1554, she was excited at the prospect of meeting her husband. Not even the driving rain outside could dampen her enthusiasm. Arranging her clothes with careful hands, her ladies smiled to see Mary's happiness, thinking it was about time that she was fulfilled as a woman. She might have inherited the throne at last, despite all the obstacles of succession and religion, but Tudor culture dictated that the primary function of a woman was to be a wife and mother. Even a queen. Especially a queen.

DIPLOMATIC TOOL

Born in February 1516, Mary Tudor was the only surviving child of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. As a result, she was launched upon the marriage market early, being engaged first to the infant son of Francis I of France at the age of two and then to her cousin Charles, Holy Roman Emperor, at six. With Mary as a tool of her father's policies, these betrothals sealed his diplomatic alliances, and she was afforded the name and status of Queen of France, and later, Empress. They gave the little girl hopes of a glittering future partnership. Yet both these arrangements came to nothing, and despite interest from the Dukes of Bavaria and Cleves, Mary remained unmarried into her thirties. Finally, as queen, she was able to take the decision into her own hands, even though her contemporaries considered her almost too old to marry.

Mary was not too old, however, for the powerful feelings she developed after exchanging letters and pictures with Philip, son of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles. Philip's portrait was painted by Titian and sent to England, depicting a young man with shapely legs in white hose, black and gold armour, and prominent eyes. It pleased the lonely queen very much. Philip's Catholicism was an added bonus, as Mary hoped to undo recent Protestant reforms and restore older methods of worship in England, continuing her mother's legacy. The proposed groom had already been married once, to Maria of Portugal and, promisingly, had fathered a son.

Yet Mary's enthusiasm for the marriage met with resistance in her council, reflecting the English suspicion of foreigners, let alone one who intended to rule them. An anti-Spanish rebellion broke out in early 1554, led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, but the rebels were quickly suppressed and Mary invited Philip to England with assurances of his safety. She sent a large diamond to welcome him, "after the custom of the country," and he had sent one in return, albeit much smaller than hers. It was a diamond, nonetheless, and delivered with all due ceremony and reverence, but their comparative sizes were to prove symbolic of the affection each partner invested in the match.

On 23 July, 1554, Mary Tudor met Philip Habsburg. He had landed at Southampton only four days before, and then travelled through the pouring rain to Wolvesey Palace, seat of the Bishops of Winchester. The rooms had been hung with gold and silk tapestries to welcome him. He proceeded to Mary's lodgings and knocked upon the door; opening it, she found herself face to face with a lean, imposing man of 27, sporting a full beard, heavy brows above large, dark eyes, and a prominent, full mouth. He was dressed in an embroidered suit and his tight, colourful hose showed off his calves and thighs. Mary was delighted.

"When she first saw Philip, Mary was delighted. For Philip, the meeting evoked different emotions"

For Philip, though, the meeting evoked different emotions. He saw a short, thin woman approaching 40, dressed in black velvet and jewels, with a functional, rather than beautiful, face. Always very status-conscious, Philip was sensitive to Mary's superior rank. He was still only the son of the emperor, and would not become king of Spain until Charles abdicated in 1556. As a gesture of equality, Charles bestowed upon his son the Kingdom of Naples, but in real terms, this did little to level the stakes.

However, suppressing this inversion of the usual gender dynamic, Philip's behaviour in public was impeccable. Leaning forward to kiss Mary, in compliance with the English custom, his manner betrayed a man who was highly conscious of protocol, decorum, and the service he was doing his country. Philip's personal response, though, was one of disappointment. As his minister Ruy Gomez de Silva commented, the queen was "a very good creature, though rather older than we had been told" ▶

Thomas Wyatt (*above, far right*) led an anti-Spanish rebellion, borne out of a widespread distrust of foreigners across England at this time

BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY X1, GETTY IMAGES X3

and if she were to adopt Spanish fashions, "she would not look so old and flabby." This did not prevent the diplomatic Philip from sitting hand in hand with Mary, and he "remained for a time in pleasant conversation," very "tactful and attentive."

THE WEDDING ARRIVES

The next day, 24 July, was the day before the wedding. Mary sent her tailor to Philip with two suits in the French style, one of crimson brocade, another in rich brocade adorned with gold thread, pearls and diamond buttons. French fashions were prominent at the English court, but they differed substantially from Spanish costume. Philip did not object to the gift, nor having his outfit chosen for him, nor the assumption that he would conform. Such coordinated outfits were common among royalty, to make an outward show of their unity and, particularly in this case, to demonstrate Philip's willingness to be "Anglicised". That afternoon in the hall, the couple kissed formally, and walked together through the rooms before talking "pleasantly for some time". All the signs were auspicious for the forthcoming nuptials, and onlookers declared it had been arranged by God.

Mary and Philip were married on 25 July, in Winchester Cathedral. It was St James' Day, the patron saint of Spain, a respectful tribute to the new arrival. Separately, the couple processed along a raised platform into a chapel with hangings of gold and purple, where the Bishop of Winchester heard their vows.

In addition to the gold mantle adorned with pearls that Mary had sent him, Philip also wore the collar of the Order of the Garter, embedding him further in English royal tradition. Chairs had been placed for the royal pair on the main dais, where they would sit to hear Mass; once again, Mary's higher status was reinforced, as her chair was more prominent. Philip was pronounced king of England, but only in *jure uxoris* (by right of his wife) due to Mary's status. After the ceremony was concluded, the queen demonstrated her piety by remaining with her eyes fixed upon the sacrament for an hour, prompting one Spaniard to comment that she was a "saintly woman." Philip, however, was not necessarily looking to marry a saint.

To the blare of trumpets, the newlyweds walked under a canopy connecting the cathedral to nearby Wolvesey Palace. A banquet was laid out in the great hall, hung with brocades and tapestries, where several hundred English and Spanish guests were "admirably served, in perfect order and silence". This was followed by dancing, where Philip partnered Mary in a German composition, before they separated and each retired to their own chambers, according to custom. That evening, Philip was led in procession to Mary's bed, which was blessed by the bishop, before the crowd of well-wishers receded.

"What happened that night," one anonymous source recorded, "only they know. If they give us a son our joy will be complete." Four days later, Cardinal Pole wrote to the emperor that he had "heard privately that your son, the king, was received in the Kingdom of England with great and universal satisfaction and content, and that the marriage was happily consummated."

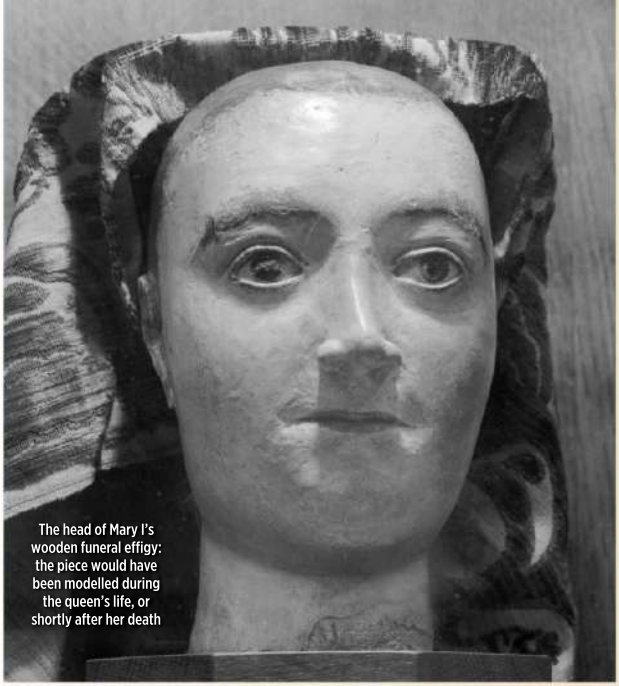
Mary was delighted with her husband and swiftly fell in love. She proved an affectionate, doting wife, deferring to

ABOVE: **The Order of the Garter – Philip wore its collar on his wedding day to embed in English tradition**

ABOVE RIGHT: **Cardinal Pole, the last Catholic archbishop of Canterbury, was the man who conveyed to the Holy Roman Emperor that the marriage had been consummated**

GETTY IMAGES X3, ALAMY X4

ABOVE: **Mary Tudor and Philip were married at Winchester Cathedral** LEFT: **The chair used by Mary I at her wedding** RIGHT: **Coin commemorating Philip's third marriage, to Elisabeth of Valois**



The head of Mary I's wooden funeral effigy: the piece would have been modelled during the queen's life, or shortly after her death

"Mary's bloated stomach subsided and she finally emerged, childless, from the birthing chamber"

Philip's advice and wishes whenever protocol allowed. She encouraged him to attend council and envisioned herself as the mother of a happy family.

For all his polite diplomacy, though, Philip was uneasy. This was partly due to the discrepancy in their status, which would see him marginalised by Mary's advisors, but also the anti-Spanish feeling in England. Imperial servant Simon Renard noted the language barrier, and that "the English hate strangers," finding a group of them challenging. Several Spaniards "have already been robbed" and billeted in "bad and insufficient lodgings."

Philip had been "forewarned" that it would be wise to win favour with the English people as a means of keeping the nobility in check. He was praised by his companions for the good impression he had created upon them, and the "graciousness of his bearing towards one and all". It was considered that the royal couple were already so fond of each other, that it must grow into a perfect union. The emperor praised his son for showing Mary the love and respect she deserved. De Silva added that "the queen is very happy with the king, and the king with her" and that Philip "strives to give her every possible proof of it, in order to omit no part of his duty."

And yet, duty was Philip's overriding emotion. As Mary's love for him deepened, he remained respectful, but did not reciprocate her feelings. A reserved and proud man, he was deeply discontented at having been denied a coronation and was not given an English patrimony, forcing him to rely upon his Spanish funds. Yet his father's advice, and Mary's queenship, kept him at her side, attentive yet frustrated in the subservient role he found himself.

Within months of the wedding Mary believed herself to be pregnant and excitedly prepared for the arrival of her first child. Philip, however, expressed private doubts. In April, Mary took to her chamber in anticipation of the birth. But as the weeks passed, instead of going into labour, Mary's bloated stomach subsided and she finally emerged, childless, from the birth chamber in early August. Humiliated and disappointed, Mary's false pregancy and swollen stomach were probably the result of infection or, perhaps, wishful thinking.

AN ABSENT HUSBAND

After becoming King of Spain in 1556, Philip spent long periods of their brief marriage abroad, during which time Mary experienced a second phantom pregnancy. Increasingly, the queen retreated into her faith as her only comfort. Philip was pursuing his military campaign in the Netherlands when Mary fell ill and died, in November 1558. She was only 42. Hers was a sad demise; lonely, deserted and without the loving spouse and children she had longed for. Philip's kingship of England immediately expired with Mary, as her younger sister, the Protestant Elizabeth, succeeded to the throne.

Keen to retain his English influence, Philip now saw a new opportunity in the person of the red-haired, 25-year-old queen. He made a proposal of marriage to Elizabeth, but amid her procrastinations, turned instead to a Valois princess of the same name. Relations between England and Spain would remain amicable for decades, before breaking down irrevocably in the late 1570s. The promise of the Anglo-Spanish marriage of 1554 went unrealised.

THE OTHER PHILIP

Before the Spanish prince, Mary had her eye on Anne of Cleves' cousin

The closest Mary came to marriage before Philip of Spain was with his namesake, Philip, Duke of Palatinate-Neuburg. Thirteen years her senior, he was a member of the Wittelsbach family, a cousin of Anne of Cleves and had distinguished himself against the Turks, earning the name of "the Warrior." In the late 1530s, when Henry VIII was seeking Protestant allies, Philip travelled to England with the express purpose of winning Mary's hand. She was then 23. They met in the beautiful gardens at Eltham Palace in December 1539, where he presented the then princess with a diamond cross set with pearls, and she thanked him through an interpreter. She spoke no German and he knew no English, but they shared a little Latin, and a few kisses. He offered marriage "if his person pleased her", but she was wise enough to reply she would obey her father's wishes on the matter. The court expected to hear the nuptials announced. But Henry had never intended to give his eldest daughter to Germany and despite three later visits, Philip was only permitted to see Mary once more. He was sent home empty-handed, but England continued to dangle Mary before him for another five years. He never married, and died in 1548.

Mary I's other noted suitor was also called Philip – he was Anne of Cleves' cousin

AMY LICENCE is an author and historian. Her forthcoming book, *Woodsmoke and Sage: The Five Senses 1485–1603: How the Tudors Experienced the World* (The History Press), is on sale from 26 August

WHAT IF... BRITAIN AND FRANCE HAD GONE TO WAR IN 1898?

Jonny Wilkes talks to historian, novelist and broadcaster **Saul David** about the Fashoda Incident of 1898, and how it could have led to a very different looking World War I

On 4 November 1898, the old adversaries of Britain and France stepped back from an escalating situation that threatened to add another bloody chapter to their long history of warfare. The so-called Fashoda Incident may have seemed like a small-scale territorial dispute over an unimportant patch of land in modern-day South Sudan, but it caused fear and warmongering back in Europe. If fighting did break out, it would have had "huge consequences for international relations and the course of the 20th century," says historian and author Saul David.

COLONISATION AT ANY COST

Africa in the late-19th century was being carved up, claimed and colonised by European powers in what is often referred to as the 'Scramble for Africa'. Britain and France had footholds across the continent, and wished to connect their colonial acquisitions. Britain was ambitiously planning a railroad from South Africa to Egypt; France was looking to establish a line of control from east to west. And right in the middle, where their respective ambitions intersected, was a small town called Fashoda.

The French were determined to get there first. In 1896, an expedition set out from Gabon made up of around 150 men – including 11 French officers and a large number of Senegalese troops – under the command of Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchand. Following a gruelling trek across Central Africa, in which they kept getting lost and had to drag their boat across hundreds of miles of land, they reached Fashoda on 10 July 1898. Although comprising little more than an abandoned fort in ruins, the strategic town was now in the hands of Marchand and his men.

Fashoda would strengthen France's trade route from West Africa to its outpost in Djibouti, and act as a base from which to force the British out of Egypt. Marchand's audacious expedition could not be ignored. The British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, ordered a force under Major-General Horatio Herbert Kitchener to advance south along the Nile River. Kitchener was on campaign to reconquer Sudan for British-controlled Egypt, having decisively defeated the Muslim Mahdists in the battle of Omdurman and occupied Khartoum.

He reached Fashoda on 18 September 1898 and met with Marchand. Firmly stating his position that French presence in Egyptian territory could not be accepted, Kitchener made it clear that, while he would not instigate a conflict, he would not back down. The French commander expressed the same, fully aware his enemy outnumbered his force 10 to one and was supported by gunboats. A standoff began as both sides waited for their governments to make their moves.

ON THE BRINK OF WAR

Despite both men remaining calm, news of the Fashoda Incident sparked a political crisis in Britain and France. Newspapers were filled with rhetoric and patriotic fervour. The Royal Navy was put on alert and the fleet in the Mediterranean readied for action. There were calls for war in parliament. France attempted, unsuccessfully, to ensure Russian support in an imminent conflict. The longer that things went unchanged in Fashoda, the closer Europe seemed to get to all-out war.

In truth, neither side wanted that to happen. Lord Salisbury refused to send an ultimatum to Paris and the French had become consumed by other concerns, namely the Dreyfus Affair. The ongoing scandal had divided opinion between those who believed army captain Alfred Dreyfus had been rightly convicted

IN CONTEXT

The Fashoda Incident of 1898 culminated in a tense standoff between British and French forces over an abandoned fort in Africa. A 150-strong French expedition had secured the town of Fashoda (Kodok in South Sudan) in British-controlled Egypt, and had refused to back down when confronted by 1,500 men under Horatio Herbert Kitchener. As the standoff dragged on, the political situation in Europe worsened as Britain went on a war footing.

On 4 November, however, the small French force withdrew, ensuring Britain maintained control over the area. The boundary of their respective dominions would be set at the Nile and Congo rivers with the French to the west and the British in Egypt. A few years after the Fashoda Incident, in 1904, the two nations signed the Entente Cordiale, an agreement that greatly improved relations, ended colonial rivalries, and laid the foundations of the alliance against Germany in World War I.

General Marchand led a vastly outnumbered French expeditionary force at Fashoda

GETTY IMAGES X2, ALAMY X1

of treason several years earlier, and those who believed he was the innocent victim of a military cover-up and anti-Semitism.

But the situation at Fashoda could have changed, believes David. A stray bullet, a moment of lapsed leadership, or a piece of miscommunication could have seen the British and French come to blows. If a firefight had occurred, Marchand would likely have lost badly due to Kitchener's overwhelming numerical supremacy. While a quick victory may be have been enough to sate the British, the French would have been humiliated and all-too easily sought retaliation.

With Britain and France going to war, alliances would have been drawn up. The Russians were certainly hostile to the British due to the 'Great Game' – diplomatic and political confrontations over Afghanistan, Central and South Asia – so may have sided with the French, and Germany may have allied themselves with Britain. It could have quickly become a world war if fighting were to consume colonies, which could have benefitted the British as they had a clear advantage at sea thanks to the Royal Navy.

Whatever the outcome, the greatest result of an armed conflict would have been the loss of the Entente Cordiale in 1904. "Fighting would have kept Britain out of the loose 'alliance' with Russia and France that Germany found so threatening in the lead up to World War I," says David. "Would this have prevented the war? Probably not. Germany had already embarked on its policy of world power, building up its navy to challenge Britain's. That arms race would have continued."

Yet a war in 1898 provoked by the Fashoda Incident may have kept Britain out of that world war entirely, continues David, drastically changing the complex networks of alliances that formed, how the war was fought, and who would have won. The Central Powers – Germany and Austria-Hungary – could have emerged victorious. "That would have meant an authoritarian, anti-Semitic, nationalist government dominating mainland Europe for the foreseeable future, with much of Eastern Europe reduced to slave state status, and those in the west subordinated to Germany." ⊙

LISTEN

BBC RADIO 4 The Berlin Conference, which formalised European colonial activity in Africa, is discussed on an episode of *In Our Time*: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03ffkfd*

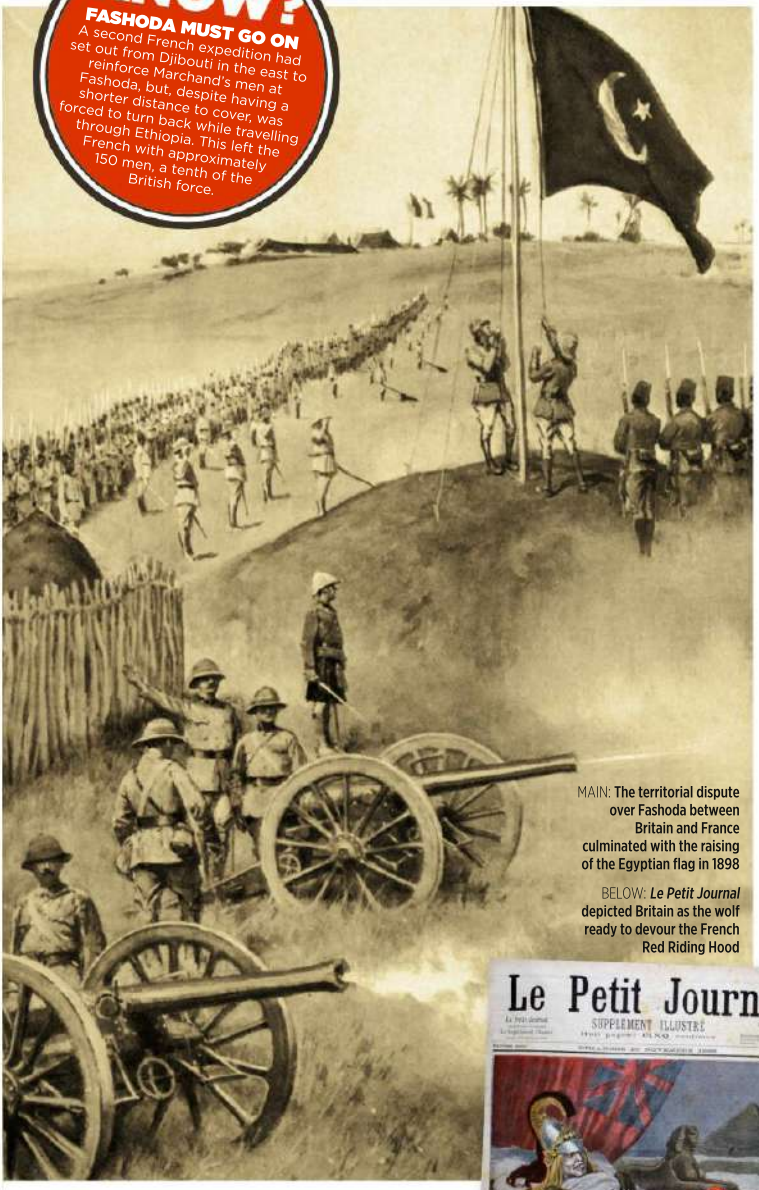
NEXT MONTH

What if... Spain hadn't conquered the Aztecs?

DID YOU KNOW?

FASHODA MUST GO ON

A second French expedition had set out from Djibouti in the east to reinforce Marchand's men at Fashoda, but, despite having a shorter distance to cover, was forced to turn back while travelling through Ethiopia. This left the French with approximately 150 men, a tenth of the British force.



MAIN: **The territorial dispute over Fashoda between Britain and France culminated with the raising of the Egyptian flag in 1898**

BELOW: ***Le Petit Journal*** **depicted Britain as the wolf ready to devour the French Red Riding Hood**

"WAR IN 1898 PROVOKED BY THE FASHODA INCIDENT MAY HAVE KEPT BRITAIN OUT OF WORLD WAR I ENTIRELY"

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Men of No 83 Squadron are all smiles as they pass a Handley Page Hampden bomber at RAF Scampton, Lincolnshire, October 1940

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GETTY IMAGES

182

The height, in metres, of the world's tallest statue as of 2021, the Statue of Unity in India. The Colossus of Rhodes, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, was around 32 metres.

DEATH STARE
A statue of Yi Sun-shin watches over Gwanghwamun Plaza in Seoul, South Korea. The admiral is known for designing a type of warship known as a *kobukson*, or turtle ship (*inset*)

Who was Yi Sun-shin?

SHORT ANSWER The Korean career soldier, the undefeated admiral and the ultimate underdog

LONG ANSWER No list of 'history's greatest admirals' is complete without Yi Sun-shin. Not only did the 16th-century Korean never lose a battle, but he didn't even lose a ship. Take that, Nelson.

Japan made a habit of invading Korea during the 1590s, landing huge forces to sweep across the country to Seoul with support from hundreds of ships. Yi, an army officer who served with distinction at every post he held but whose march up the ranks had been frustrated by rivals, was appointed a naval commander. He took to the sea like, well, a duck to water. Fastidious with training and preparation, and with a brilliant military mind, Yi won every battle and fought off the invasion. He also designed his own ship, the *kobukson*, or turtle ship, with a spiked metal roof to prevent boarding and a dragonhead bow capable of firing cannon or smoke.

Still, his best was to come. Japan returned in 1597 and ripped through the Korean navy while Yi was, once again, out of favour. All seemed doomed when he was desperately reinstated as commander of the fleet, which now consisted of just 12 ships – against Japan's 133, plus 200 supporting vessels.

But Yi won. Big. The Koreans just lost a handful of men while approximately half the Japanese force was killed or wounded.

ALAMY X2

HORSE POWER
Shergar, ridden by Walter Swinburn, gallops to victory during the 1981 Epsom Derby. The horse was abducted less than two years later

What happened to Shergar?

SHORT ANSWER The Derby-winning racehorse may have been a victim of the IRA

LONG ANSWER As well as his victories in 1981 – when he won five major races, including the Epsom Derby by an astonishing 10 lengths – Shergar is also remembered for his dramatic abduction less than two years later.

Enjoying his retirement as a breeding stallion valued at £10m, the thoroughbred was stolen by a gang of eight masked gunmen who stormed into Ballymany Stud farm in Ireland and threatened the head groom, Jim Fitzgerald. The horse-nappers demanded £2m in ransom.

When the 34-strong syndicate with shares in Shergar refused to pay, all went silent. He was never seen again and for years it seemed his fate would never be known. Then, in 1999, an informant of the Irish Republican Army, Sean O'Callaghan, claimed they had been responsible and revealed that a highly stressed and panicked Shergar injured his leg, so they shot and hastily buried him in the Irish countryside.

21

King Louis XVI of France considered the number 21 unlucky since childhood. The French monarchy was abolished on 21 September 1792 and he was beheaded on 21 January 1793.

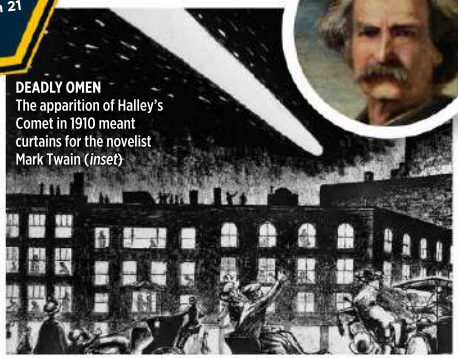
Did Mark Twain predict his own death?

SHORT ANSWER Yes, the self-proclaimed "unaccountable freak" had a freakishly accurate prophecy

LONG ANSWER Samuel Clemens, better known by his penname Mark Twain, was born in 1835 just after the passing of Halley's Comet. The event clearly held significance for the American author of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, for in 1909 he made a bold prediction: "I came in with Halley's Comet in 1835. It is coming again next year, and I expect to go out with it.

"It will be the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt, 'Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together'."

Sure enough, one day after the comet's pass in 1910, the already ailing Twain died of a heart attack, aged 74.



DEADLY OMEN
The apparition of Halley's Comet in 1910 meant curtains for the novelist Mark Twain (*inset*)

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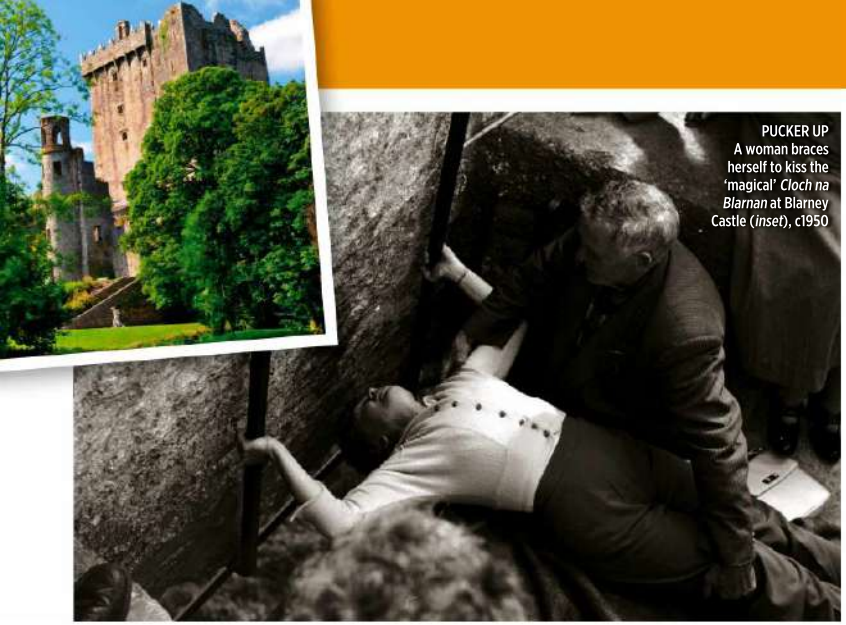
When was the first Zeppelin flight?

SHORT ANSWER A new century brought a new mode of transportation

LONG ANSWER Ferdinand, Graf von Zeppelin made his first flight in a balloon as a military observer in the American Civil War in 1863. Oops... wrong Zeppelin flight! His rigid airship came later, although that balloon ascent *did* inspire his dream of building a lighter-than-air craft, which he dedicated himself to after retiring from the Germany army in 1890. By the dawn of the 20th century, the airship he named after himself was ready to fly.

LZ-1 – 128 metres long and driven by two 16-horsepower engines – took off from a floating hangar on Lake Constance, near Friedrichshafen, Germany, on 2 July 1900. Over 17 minutes, the Zeppelin carried five people to an altitude of 410 metres and a distance of 3.7 miles. It was a landmark (skymark?) moment, but not everything went smoothly. The weight system used to control the airship jammed, an engine failed and winds forced a bumpy emergency landing.

BACK DOWN TO EARTH
LZ-1 lands in Munich, 1905. The airship, designed by Ferdinand von Zeppelin (*inset*), made its maiden voyage five years earlier



PUCKER UP
A woman braces herself to kiss the 'magical' *Cloch na Blarnan* at Blarney Castle (*inset*), c1950

Why do people kiss the Blarney Stone?

SHORT ANSWER Honestly, the lengths some people will go to for a smooch and the gift of the gab

LONG ANSWER Those who head to County Cork, Ireland, and add their name to the millions who have kissed the *Cloch na Blarnan* (Blarney Stone) hope to be bestowed with eloquence, it is said. The only problem: the magical rock is set high up in the battlements of Blarney Castle and the only way to get your lips near enough is to hang upside down over a gap 27 metres above the ground.

There have been many theories for the stone's origins: did Scotland's Robert the Bruce present it as a thank you for Irish help in the battle of Bannockburn? Was it hewn from Stonehenge? Or did crusaders bring it back from the Holy Land, believing it to be a biblical relic? Good stories; not possible, though. In 2014, geologists at the University of Glasgow studied a slither of the stone and concluded it was a type of limestone unique to southern Ireland.

That leaves the tale of Cormac MacCarthy, King of Munster, who built the original castle. He called upon the goddess Cliodhna to help him plead his case in a lawsuit. She told him to kiss the first stone on his way to court, which he did and won the case with his eloquent arguments. MacCarthy then had that stone built into the castle's parapet, although why so high up is anyone's guess.

DID YOU KNOW?

SALT IN A WOUND
A group of men opposed to women in politics added activist Susanna Salter's name to the ballot for mayor of Argonia, Kansas, in 1887 – unbeknownst to her. Their prank backfired as Salter actually ended up winning the election.

SHIP SHAPE
Garsett House on Princes Street, Norwich, was allegedly constructed in the 16th century using timbers that washed up on the Norfolk coast following the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. It is also known as Armada House.

H2Os AND 1s
In 1936, the Russian scientist Vladimir Lukyanov invented a computer that ran on water. Using a series of interconnected tubes, pipes and pumps, the Water Integrator helped him solve partial differential equations.

BIRD BRAINED
The death of the fifth-century BC Athenian playwright, Aeschylus, the 'father of tragedy', could have easily fit into one of his plays. According to legend, he died when an eagle dropped a tortoise on him, mistaking his bald head for a rock.

Were Roman soldiers paid in salt?

SHORT ANSWER Yet another history anecdote that needs to be taken with a pinch of salt

LONG ANSWER One of those dogged historical titbits states that salt was so valuable in Roman times that legionnaires would take payment in the stuff instead of money. The story goes on that this is where the word salary comes from, stemming from the Latin salarium (the 'sal' bit meaning salt).

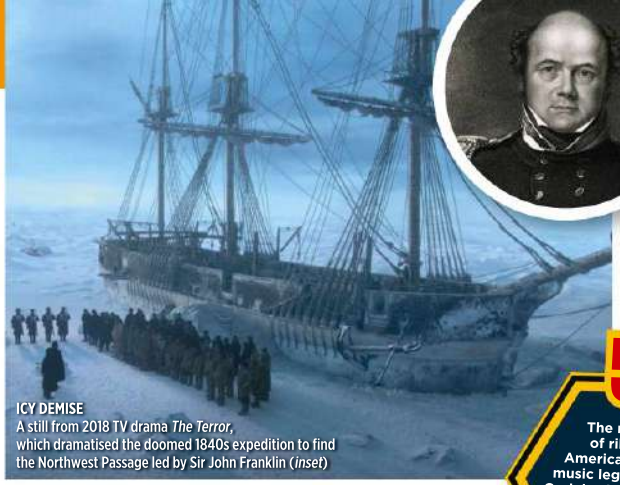
There is just no reason to believe it to be true. It was something to add flavour to history, perhaps.

How would it have worked? Were soldiers lugging around bags of salt everywhere they marched? There is another theory that they were given an allowance in order to buy salt, but even this may also be nothing more than an attempt to come up with a neat explanation for the etymological connection between salarium and salt.

When was the deadliest hailstorm?

SHORT ANSWER An episode of freak weather in 1888 remains a record killer

LONG ANSWER On 30 April 1888, Moradabad in northern India had a dramatic shift in the weather. A storm struck with, according to the World Meteorological Organisation, hailstones the size of "goose eggs and oranges and cricket balls", falling in such numbers that they formed piles of up to two feet. There were certainly too many to avoid. The death toll from the icy salvo was 246 people, making it the deadliest hailstorm in recorded history. They weren't the largest hailstones, however: in 2018, hail rained down in Villas Carlos Paz, Argentina, measuring 9.3 inches across – about the width of a basketball.



ICY DEMISE
A still from 2018 TV drama *The Terror*, which dramatised the doomed 1840s expedition to find the Northwest Passage led by Sir John Franklin (*inset*)

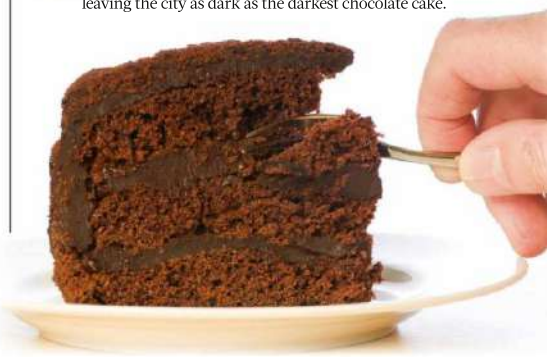
How did the 'blackout cake' get its name?

SHORT ANSWER Wartime blackouts offered a lightbulb moment for one New York bakery

LONG ANSWER A ridiculously rich three-layered chocolate cake filled with chocolate pudding, frosting and cake crumbs on top: surely the name refers to what happens to anyone who eats a slice as they blackout into a sugar coma? Actually, it concerns the type of blackout common in World War II.

The cake had been created at the New York bakery Ebinger's, which opened in 1898, but the war offered a marketing opportunity. They started marketing their chocolately masterpiece as the Brooklyn blackout cake, since the neighbouring naval yard was a target for enemy bombers. New York had regular blackout drills, where the illuminations of skyscrapers, billboards and streets would be extinguished to protect ships heading into open water, leaving the city as dark as the darkest chocolate cake.

5
The number of ribs that American country music legend Johnny Cash broke after he got into a fight with his pet ostrich in 1981.



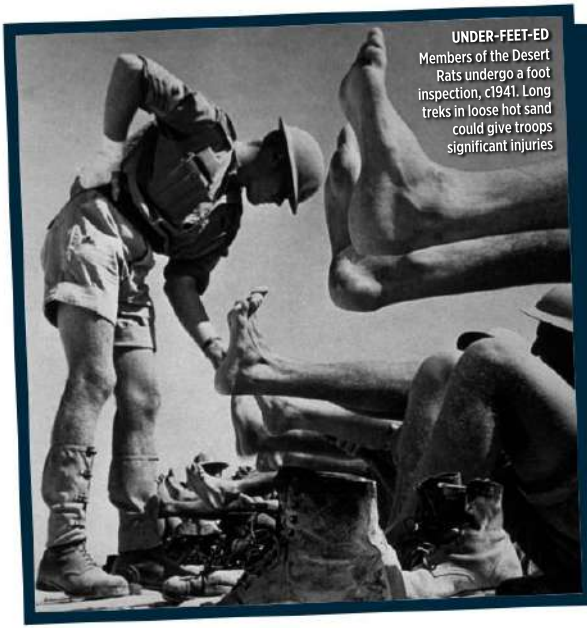
Who discovered the Northwest Passage?

SHORT ANSWER It took the greatest failure in the centuries-old hunt for the secrets of the Passage to be unlocked

LONG ANSWER From the late 15th century, the search for a navigable route connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans became an obsession for European sailors and explorers. For all the expeditions into the frozen expanse of the Arctic Archipelago, however, no one had succeeded to force open the Northwest Passage by the mid-19th century, and many perished in the attempts. The most infamous was British Royal Navy officer Sir John Franklin's expedition with HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, which vanished in 1848 and all 129 men perished.

Yet from that tragedy, the solution emerged. One of the rescue missions, led by Irish polar explorer Robert McClure, discovered and traversed a passage on ship and sled. Then a few years later, Scottish surgeon John Rae, exploring by land, found another to the south. Some 50 years later, the entire Northwest Passage was finally navigated successfully, by Norwegian master of the cold Roald Amundsen, from 1903–06.

GETTY IMAGES X6, ALAMY X2



UNDER-FEET-ED
Members of the Desert Rats undergo a foot inspection, c1941. Long treks in loose hot sand could give troops significant injuries

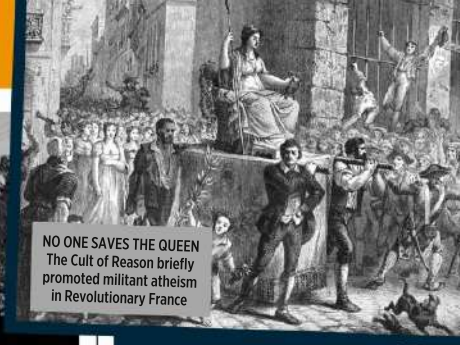
How did the Desert Rats get their name?

SHORT ANSWER Because the Desert Rats sounds cooler than the Jerboas

LONG ANSWER The men of the 7th Armoured Division in the British Army spent a lot of time in North Africa during World War II, so their nickname is not surprising. The idea came from the very top when the commander saw a jerboa, a type of hopping rodent, and thought it fit the desert-based division well. Soon, the 7th were calling themselves Desert Rats and wearing shoulder flashes depicting a red jerboa in a white circle.

They weren't the only rats around, though. That nickname was also given to the Allied troops defending the Libyan port of Tobruk, pejoratively bestowed by the English-speaking Nazi propaganda broadcaster William Joyce (known as 'Lord Haw-Haw'). For nearly eight months in 1941, thousands of Australian, Polish, British and Indian troops held off a brutal siege. When they heard Joyce call them the 'Rats of Tobruk', they adopted the name as a badge of honour.

HATE MESSAGE
Racist signs 'warning' white South Africans of black people were not uncommon during the apartheid era



NO ONE SAVES THE QUEEN
The Cult of Reason briefly promoted militant atheism in Revolutionary France

When did apartheid begin?

SHORT ANSWER The governing party in postwar South Africa passed laws that fully divided the country

LONG ANSWER Apartheid was a system of racial segregation in South Africa, where the white minority controlled and restricted every aspect of life for the non-white majority. Its end was met with celebration – with such iconic images as Nelson Mandela walking to freedom – by which time apartheid had lasted almost half a century.

Racial segregation in South Africa pre-existed apartheid, going back to 19th-century British and Dutch imperialist policies, but was institutionalised when the National Party came to power in 1948 and passed laws to enforce political, economic and social discrimination. They called this system apartheid, meaning 'apartness' in Afrikaans.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 classified all South Africans by racial group: Bantu (black), coloured (mixed race) and white, with Asian added later. The Land Acts dictated where each group could live, with whites given 80 per cent of the land and millions of non-whites forced to 'resettle' to townships. The non-white population had to carry passbooks – identification documents aimed to restrict movement – and marriage between races was completely forbidden.

Although apartheid was met with fierce opposition inside the country and widely condemned by the international community, it persisted until the early 1990s.

What was the Cult of Reason?

SHORT ANSWER A short-lived religion that believed there was no god

LONG ANSWER The words 'cult' and 'reason' aren't often seen together, unless in the anarchic atmosphere of Revolutionary France. In 1793, the First Republic sponsored a new religion called the Cult of Reason to replace Catholicism, which they saw as part of the hated system they had just overthrown.

The religion was, first and foremost, atheistic. Members believed in the attainment of truth and liberty through devotion not to God, but reason. As part of a dechristianisation of France, churches were ransacked and transformed into Temples of Reason, where festivals honoured philosophy and nature.

The Cult of Reason lasted barely a year before being replaced by another, the Cult of the Supreme Being, which returned the idea that there *was* a god. Either way, Napoleon was unimpressed and did away with them both.

What is a 'thagomizer'?

SHORT ANSWER A Gary Larson comic did what no dinosaur expert could

LONG ANSWER The distinctive, spiked tail of the dinosaur *Stegosaurus* did not have a proper name until 1982, when it became known as a *thagomizer*. However, the term wasn't coined by a leading palaeontologist, but by American cartoonist Gary Larson. In one of Larson's strips published that year, a caveman teacher in a prehistoric classroom is shown pointing to a picture of a *Stegosaurus* tail, telling his students it is called a "thagomizer" in honour of "the late Thag Simmons". While humans didn't even live at the same time as the dinosaurs, experts liked the name and began using it. And they never stopped.

A STRANGE TAIL
Gary Larson, known for his single-panel comic *The Far Side*, named a part of dino anatomy

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ONE TO WATCH

The Green Knight stars Oscar-nominated actor Dev Patel as Sir Gawain – one of the central figures of Arthurian legend

David Lowery's long-awaited fantasy epic features a whole host of ghosts and giants

Fateful encounter

The Green Knight / In cinemas from Friday 6 August

It's a tale that in key respects follows beats familiar from superhero origin stories. But in writer-director David Lowery's new film, the backdrop isn't contemporary and doesn't involve a fateful laboratory mishap. Instead, we're in the mythical realm of Camelot, where the arrival of a giant green-skinned traveller provokes a headstrong young knight.

Accepting the challenge of landing a blow against this mysterious stranger, Arthur's nephew, Gawain, springs into action while older and wiser knights hold back, only to find his taunting adversary has eldritch recuperative powers. Worse, Gawain has struck a bargain that means he has, quite literally, to prepare to put his own neck on the line a year hence.

Based on an epic poem dating from the 14th century, the story of Sir Gawain is one of the best known and best loved of the Arthurian chivalric tales, its popularity given a fillip when it was translated for a mass readership by JRR Tolkien in 1925. Familiarity has done little to lessen its power. Here is a coming-of-age story that also deals with our relationship with nature and with how the privileged need to learn humility if they're to find the wisdom needed to lead.

"[The story] was written in the 14th century and yet it feels entirely modern," Lowery (whose *The Old Man & The Gun* earned an Golden Globe nomination for Robert Redford) has noted. Only in grappling with the text of the poem, he added, did he begin to realise just how complex it really was.

Still, don't expect an overly worthy adaptation. Instead, Lowery's cinematic version, "an interpretation of the text" but also a "conversation with it", promises CGI spectacle, a talking fox and, as Gawain, British actor Dev Patel displaying the same wit and charm he also brought to Armando Iannucci's *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, in 2019.

Ralph Ineson (*The Witch, Chernobyl*) plays the film's title character

ALAMY X3

Sophie Okonedo (*right, centre*) joins the main cast of *Britannia* as the wife of General Aulus Plautius

Chloé Delanney (*main*) is among the new additions to *Ghosts*, which sees a young couple (played by Charlotte Ritchie and Kiell Smith-Bynoe, *below*) try to live side-by-side with some troublesome spooks

Laurence Rickard returns to the series as 'Headless' Humphrey

Haunted house

Ghosts / BBC One and BBC iPlayer, 9 August

For those who have yet to sample the delights of *Ghosts*, which is returning for a third series, it's an ensemble comedy that rests on a beautifully simple premise. First, a young couple, Alison and Mike, inherit crumbling Button House from an aged relative. Ignoring their lawyer's sage advice to sell the property, the couple move in and decide to renovate it instead.

But Button House is filled with bickering ghosts, as Alison discovers when, after a fall from a window and a spell in a coma, she becomes able to see and hear these spirits. With everyone, as in all the best sitcoms, stuck in the same locale – Alison and Mike because of financial reasons, the ghosts because that's the nature of their respective afterlives – all concerned have to learn to get along.

Written and performed by many of the cast members of *Horrible Histories*, *Ghosts* has a similarly irreverent attitude to the past. So it is that we meet the likes of caveman Robin, failed Romantic poet Thomas Thorne and Julian Fawcett, a Conservative MP seemingly doomed to manifest for eternity without his trousers following a sex scandal.

Specific details about the new shows were still a little sketchy as *BBC History Revealed* went to press, but in the land of the living, Alison and Mike have plans to open a guest house. But that's to reckon without an unexpected visitor "who arrives with a life-changing revelation". Alison is assailed by doubts, shared by some but by no means all of her ghostly companions. Newbies can catch up with the first two series via BBC iPlayer.

Rebel alliance

Britannia / Sky Atlantic, August

Shot through with a gleeful hallucinatory quality that's hard to resist, *Britannia* imagines life as it may have played out in the years following the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43. To judge by a show co-created by acclaimed playwright Jez Butterworth, this was a time when Britain was in a state of flux.

Then again, how could it be otherwise at a point when the forces of the empire, led by General Aulus Plautius (David Morrissey) are struggling to subdue a land populated by warring Celtic tribes and druids with a fondness for altered states?

In the third series, Cait (Eleanor Worthington Cox) continues to build a rag-tag rebel alliance against the invaders from the south. Her fate, it seems, is inexorably bound up with the fate of a war-torn land. Elsewhere, Veran (Mackenzie Crook) visits the underworld, where he sees the future.

Muriel McKay's family appeal for information regarding her whereabouts, 1970. The housewife was kidnapped after being mistaken for Rupert Murdoch's spouse

MONUMENTAL TELEVISION X3, SKY UK LTD X1, STORYVAULT X2, GETTY X3, BETTMANN X1

Literary journeys

Write Around the World with Richard E Grant / BBC Four, Tuesday 3 August

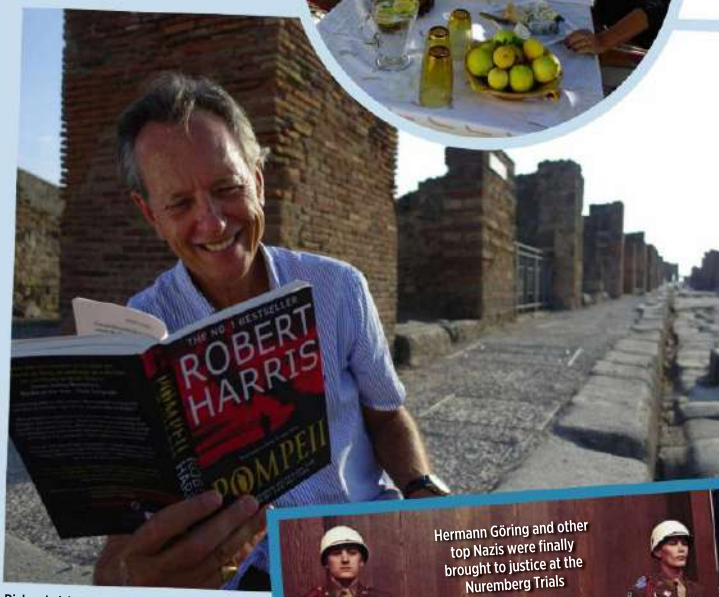
The star's travels also take him to France, where he finds time to dine with fellow actor Carol Drinkwater

Restless, expansive and genuinely curious about subjects that pique his interest, actor Richard E Grant is good company when he plays himself. Which is precisely what he does for a new series that combines two of Grant's passions: books and travel.

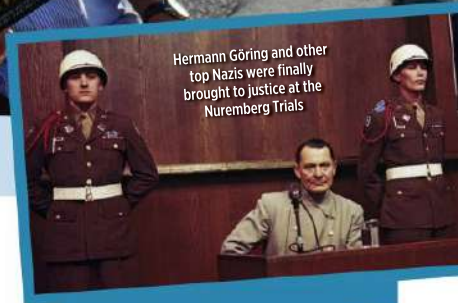
In each of the three episodes, Grant heads to Mediterranean destinations that down the years have inspired writers. He begins in southern Italy. In Pompeii, this means wandering ancient remains while clutching a copy of Robert Harris' thriller named after the town and set around the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, in AD 79. Further south along the Amalfi coast, he also stops at Positano, where Patricia Highsmith once watched "a solitary young man" walk along the beach and created her most famous character, the cold-hearted serial killer Tom Ripley.

The second episode takes Grant to southern France. On the Riviera, he sees a dazzling coastline that has featured in the fiction of many famous writers, including F Scott Fitzgerald, whose final novel *Tender is the Night* was set there. In Grasse, the setting for one of his favourite books, Patrick Süskind's *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*, Grant tries his hand at making scent.

The final episode sees Grant explore southern Spain. Perhaps inevitably, Ernest Hemingway, who had a passion for bullfighting and wrote about the country's civil war in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, looms large. The more modest but no less powerful autobiographical writing of Laurie Lee, whose *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning* details his travels in the Iberian Peninsula, also features.



Richard visits southern Italy, where Robert Harris found inspiration for his bestselling 2003 novel, *Pompeii*



Hermann Göring and other top Nazis were finally brought to justice at the Nuremberg Trials

Kidnap and murder

The Wimbledon Kidnapping / Sky Documentaries, August

Arthur Road in Wimbledon is leafy and prosperous, located conveniently close to the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, but otherwise unremarkable. Yet as 1969 gave way to 1970, this was the sight of a horrific crime, the kidnap of Australian-born housewife Muriel McKay, who was never seen again, and whose body was never recovered.

As to why she was taken, this was seemingly down to mistaken identity. McKay was the wife of Alick McKay, a senior executive with News Limited. Her abductors' real target was Anna Murdoch, wife of newspaper tycoon Rupert, who had recently published *The Sun* and *News of the World*. Nevertheless, in the wake of Muriel's kidnapping, a caller who identified himself as 'M3' demanded a payment of £1m, and there were even unsuccessful attempts to deliver part of the cash.

Two Indo-Trinidadian brothers, Arthur and Nizamodeen Hosein, were ultimately convicted of Muriel's murder. This one-off documentary, featuring testimony from one of those at the centre of events, looks back at a case that has much to say about Britain at this time.

A 1969 photograph of Muriel McKay, along with mugshots of Arthur and Nizamodeen Hosein, who were later convicted of her murder

Nazis on trial

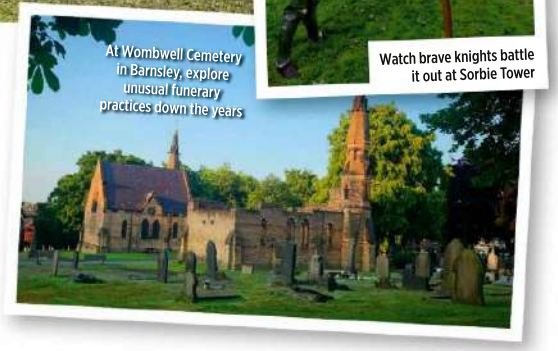
Nuremberg / BBC Radio 4, 27 August

This year marks 75 years since the trials at Nuremberg ended, where such leading Nazis as Hermann Göring and Joachim von Ribbentrop faced a reckoning for their crimes. It's a time that has often been portrayed from the perspective of those in charge of proceedings yet, as a new drama reminds us, it took the dogged work of hundreds of people to bring the prosecutions. Penned by Jonathan Myerson, who draws extensively on a variety of sources, *Nuremberg* follows the trials primarily from the perspective of those who worked behind the scenes in more junior roles. It also examines efforts to investigate Nazi atrocities, find defendants, and the negotiations needed to set up the trials.

MUST SEE

Observe a traditional graveside Victorian picnic at Rectory Lane Cemetery in Berkhamsted

Watch brave knights battle it out at Sorbie Tower



At Wombwell Cemetery in Barnsley, explore unusual funerary practices down the years

FRIENDS OF WOMBWELL CEMETERY, RECTORY LANE CEMETERY, STEVE HANNA, GETTY X 2, ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST, ALAMY X3

FESTIVAL

European Heritage Days

FREE ENTRY Throughout September, England: *heritageopendays.org.uk*, Wales: *cadw.gov.wales*, Scotland: *doorsopendays.org.uk*, Northern Ireland: *communities-ni.gov.uk/historic-environment*

As part of this year's European Heritage Days initiative, hundreds of historic sites across the UK – including many places that are normally off-limits to the general public – will be letting visitors take a look behind the scenes. Known locally as Heritage Open Days in England, Open Doors in Wales, Doors Open Days in Scotland and European Heritage Open Days in Northern Ireland, all four nations' programmes will be filled with events for families to enjoy, both in person and online.

The theme for England is 'Edible England', highlighting the country's culinary heritage and regional specialities, and exploring the role that food has played throughout English history. Visitors to Norwich will be able to discover how the cathedral's herb garden has been used over the centuries to grow both food and medicines, while at Wombwell Cemetery in Barnsley, people can uncover the unusual dining traditions that have been carried out alongside graves around the world – from pagan feasts to Victorian picnics.

There isn't an overall theme for Scotland's events, but there are numerous highlights on offer throughout the country, with the ruins of Sorbie Tower – once the site of a Pictish fort – set to host battle re-enactments, and Jedburgh Abbey scheduled to hold tours of its unusual architecture. There's a wealth of attractions to explore in Northern Ireland, too, with the likes of Belfast City Cemetery and Ulster American Folk Park joining in with the festivities.

Details of events in Wales were not available at the time we went to press, but previous Open Doors programmes have seen venues such as Neath Abbey, Hafoty Medieval House and Blaenavon Ironworks all welcoming visitors.

For the latest schedules, check the individual festival websites provided above.

Prince Philip's coronation attire will form part of the display

EXHIBITION

Prince Philip: A Celebration

PAID ENTRY Until 20 September at Windsor Castle and until 31 October at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, *rct.uk*

To celebrate the life of the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Royal Collection Trust is putting on exhibitions at Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, both exploring the Duke's childhood, World War II naval career and long-serving role as consort to Queen Elizabeth II.

The Duke's keen interests in areas such as sport, science and conservation will be reflected in the display, while items such as the robe and coronet he wore during his wife's 1953 coronation at Westminster Abbey will also be available for visitors to see up close. Entry to the exhibition is included in the cost of admission to both palaces.

FESTIVAL

Gloucester History Festival

PAID ENTRY 4–19 September, Gloucester, *gloucesterhistoryfestival.co.uk*

Gloucester's annual history festival will be returning this September for a fortnight filled with talks and events. Centred around the theme of 'Frontiers and Pioneers', highlights from the programme include a discussion with Dermot Turing, nephew of codebreaker Alan Turing, plus talks from author Alison Weir on queens of the crusades and festival president Janina Ramirez on female deities. Visit the above link to view the full schedule.

The cathedral city of Gloucester will host historians including Alison Weir (*left*) and Janina Ramirez (*right*)

EXHIBITION

Courage & Devotion

FREE ENTRY Until 12 March 2022, The Atkinson, Southport, *theatkinson.co.uk*

After the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, thousands of Polish servicemen fled to France and Britain to fight for their homeland; by the end of World War II, nearly 20,000 Poles were serving in the RAF and the Polish Air Force within Great Britain. Polish airmen also made a significant contribution to the Battle of Britain, with 145 Polish fighter pilots taking to the skies to help defeat the Germans during the summer and autumn of 1940.

Polish servicemen made up a significant part of the RAF during World War II

To celebrate the efforts of those who served, The Atkinson arts centre in Southport is putting on a free exhibition, telling the stories of Polish personnel based at nearby RAF Woodvale, which opened in December 1941. Home to the 308 Krakowski and several other Polish fighter squadrons, the airmen were tasked with helping to defend Merseyside, which had been damaged during the Liverpool Blitz earlier that year.

As well as artefacts connected to the airmen themselves, the exhibition also includes a scale model of a Spitfire Vb AB273, created by paper sculptor Suhail Shaikh.

EXHIBITION

West Indian Soldier

FREE ENTRY Until 31 October, National Army Museum, London, *nam.ac.uk*

Men and women from the West Indies have been serving with the British Army for generations, but their stories – including tales of heroism during both world wars – have often been overlooked. Running until 31 October, a new exhibition at the National Army Museum aims to redress this balance, exploring the shared military heritage between the UK and the Caribbean over the past 300 years. Packed with items, artefacts on display include a rare portrait of a private soldier in the 8th West Indian Regiment, dating back to 1804.

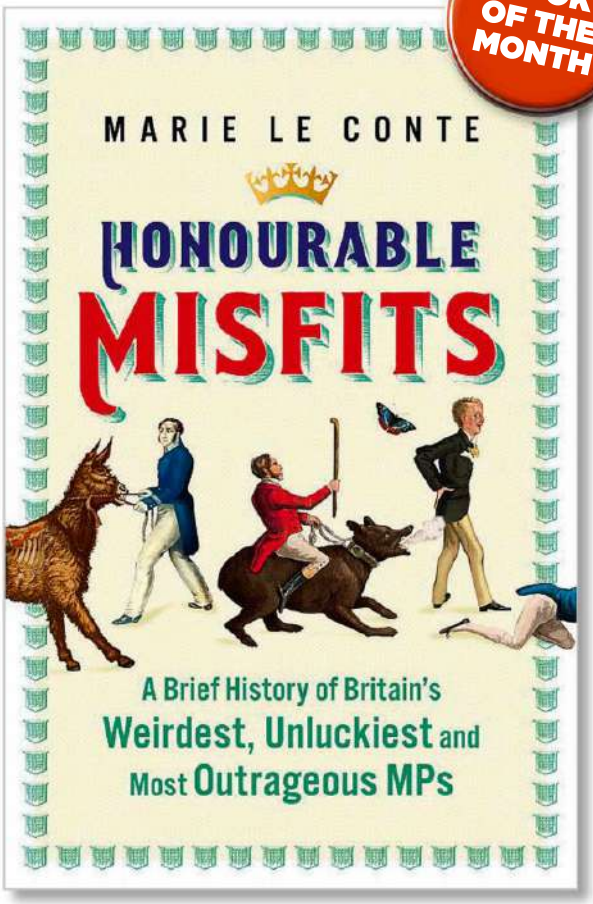
Entry to the exhibition is free, but a time slot must be booked in advance.

Thousands of West Indian men pledged to fight for Britain during WWI

BOOKS & PODCASTS

THIS MONTH'S BEST HISTORICAL READS AND LISTENS

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Honourable Misfits: A Brief History of Britain's Weirdest, Unluckiest and Most Outrageous MPs

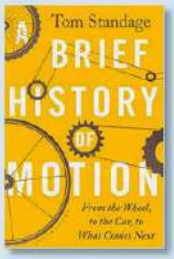
By Marie le Conte
John Murray, £14.99, hardback, 224 pages

While Britain's current parliament arguably has its share of oddballs – of all political persuasions – few compare to the gallery of unusual personalities on offer in this compendium of potted biographies. One MP enjoyed hunting in the nude; another refused to catch sight of, much less interact with, his household staff. Some of the tales capture a peculiarly British eccentricity, while others offer revealing glimpses into shifting social trends and political concerns across 700 years of history.

A Brief History of Motion: From the Wheel, to the Car, to What Comes Next

By Tom Standage
Bloomsbury, £20, hardback, 272 pages

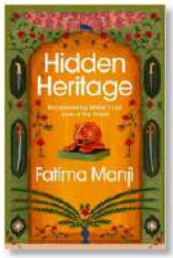
From rudimentary wheels to the prospect of self-driving cars, human progress is intrinsically bound up with the desire to get there faster. This thematic history charts the pioneers and driving forces behind this seemingly unstoppable momentum, offering new insights into the profound ways in which automobiles and their forerunners have moulded the world we know today – from city planning and environmentalism, to working and shopping.



Hidden Heritage: Rediscovering Britain's Lost Love of the Orient

By Fatima Manji
Chatto & Windus, £20, hardback, 304 pages

Unpicking the complex, contradictory ways in which the history of the UK is intertwined with that of the Islamic world, this nuanced and often poignant book adds new colour and dimension to discussions about Britain's imperial past. Taking a series of artefacts as starting points, writer and broadcaster Fatima Manji travels to a diverse array of locations, including stately homes and botanical gardens, to reveal new facets to well-worn national stories.



Blood and Ruins: The Great Imperial War, 1931–1945

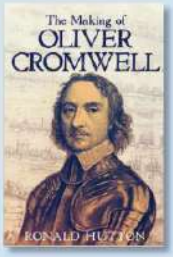
By Richard Overy
Allen Lane, £40, hardback, 1,040 pages

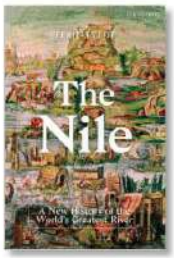
Recasting World War II as the logical continuation of decades of imperial growth and territorial ambition, this weighty new exploration of the conflict is expansive in its geographical and chronological scope. Yet it never loses sight of the very human cost of that ambition, from the troops on the front line to the civilians caught up in a struggle for international power. Clocking in at more than a thousand pages, this is a weighty, important take from a leading author in the field.

The Making of Oliver Cromwell

By Ronald Hutton
Yale University Press, £25, hardback, 400 pages

More than 300 years on, Oliver Cromwell remains one of history's most well-known figures – the only non-royal ever to hold the position of Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland. Yet how much do we really know about this soldier and statesman, a devout Puritan who was unafraid to use force and ruthlessness to achieve his aims? Historian and TV presenter Ronald Hutton offers a compelling profile of the civil war leader whose actions – including his conquest of Ireland – remain controversial.





The Nile: A New History of the World's Greatest River

By Terje Tvedt
IB Tauris, £30, hardback, 432 pages

Explorer and polymath Terje Tvedt embarks upon a historical tour of the Nile and the role it has played in Africa's cultures and civilisations across the centuries. He's an engaging, idiosyncratic guide, charting the ways in which the river has shaped everything from culture and agriculture to empire and religion. Packed with surprising detours and larger-than-life characters, it's both a fascinating study of a specific region and an illuminating look at the relationship between humans and the physical world we inhabit.

PODCAST WHAT TO LISTEN TO...

Each month we bring you three of our favourite podcasts from the BBC and HistoryExtra

Time Travels: Legends

bit.ly/TimeTravelsPod98

BBC Radio Scotland's *Time Travels* series celebrates the myriad of fascinating stories from Scottish history, and it's now available as a podcast. This recent episode is typically entertaining fare, calling on guests to explore subjects including the nation's long-running fascination with ghosts and the exploits of pirates and raiders across the centuries.

In Our Time: Shakespeare's Sonnets

bit.ly/ShakespearePod98

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" So begins one of the most famous works in English literature – Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. He composed 154 such poems but, unlike his plays, they failed to reach a wide audience during his lifetime. Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss why this might have been, shining light on less familiar gems along the way.

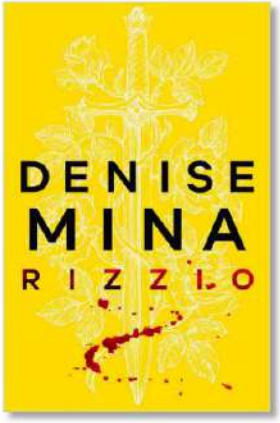
Healthcare before the NHS

bit.ly/NHSPod98

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has tested Britain's NHS like never before – and made heroes out of those on its front lines. But what kind of care might you have received before the National Health Service was founded in 1948? Historian Barry Doyle looks back at the experiences of patients and doctors in this interview from July 2021.

GETTY IMAGES X4

HISTORICAL FICTION...



Rizzio

By Denise Mina
2 September 2021, Polygon, £10

Denise Mina's new novel examines the murder of David Rizzio, the Italian-born private secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, who was stabbed by a gang of nobles in March 1566. Orchestrated by Mary's husband, Lord Darnley, the frenzied attack arguably sparked the chain of events that led to the queen's downfall.

The book is the first in Polygon's new *Darkland Tales* series, which offers retellings of stories from Scottish history by contemporary writers. The next two instalments will focus on the North Berwick witch trials of 1590 and the flight of Bonnie Prince Charlie from Culloden in 1746.

Excerpt

The story begins on the evening of 9 March 1566 in the queen's supper room at the Palace of Holyrood

Mary, Queen of Scots is six months pregnant, warm and young. She is hosting a supper for her friends in a small turret room on the second floor of the James V Tower, just off her bedroom.

Every day brings her closer to safe.

Edinburgh is cold, but spring flickers at the corner of the eyes. The light has started to change: grey is giving way to blue, the days are longer, the rain feels less spiteful. The hint of renewal is echoed in Mary's body. Her breasts are full, her cheeks are flush with extra blood, her long slim body is slowly forming into an S.

New life is coming.

She doesn't know that, right now, half the nobles of Scotland are downstairs, silently storming her Palace. They are skittering around in the dark, two hundred of them, crowding the entrances and overwhelming the guards. They've already confiscated all the keys and secured the gates. At this very moment, as she raises a morsel of meat to her mouth, Lord Ruthven and his man Henry Yair are taking the stairs to Darnley's apartments on the floor below Mary's.

No one in the supper room hears anything over their kindly chat.

OLLIE GROVE

Q&A
Denise Mina

Denise Mina is a Scottish crime writer whose work includes the *Garnethill* trilogy and the *Paddy Meehan* series. Denise has twice won the Theakston Old Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year Award and has been inducted into the Crime Writers' Association Hall of Fame.

This is a departure from your usual genre. Why did you decide to try your hand at historical fiction?
In 2016 I wrote a historical true crime novel, *The Long Drop*, set in the 1950s, so *Rizzio* wasn't a huge leap into uncharted territory. In that book I tried to tell the story in a different way, by focusing in on a short period of time instead of the usual approach of a long chronological build up and examination of the aftermath. In *Rizzio* everything happens in one long weekend. The idea for the novel came from James Crawford, commissioning editor at Polygon.

What was it about David Rizzio's murder that interested you?
The details of that weekend aren't widely discussed today, partly because they are so dark and partly because the subsequent events – the murder of Lord Darnley in 1567, followed by Mary's capture and execution – were so dramatic that we tend to brush over what happened. The events we don't care to remember are very telling, I think. The murder of David Rizzio mirrored the assassination of Julius Caesar in that a whole generation of powerful men stabbed the body so that they would all be implicated, and no one could back out.

Was it a difficult novel to research?
I expected to find it hard to connect with the story, but it was unexpectedly well documented, minute by minute. There are first-hand accounts of what happened from Mary and Lord Ruthven [one of the assassins] written shortly after the weekend. Both of those witnesses serve different sides, but reading them together, there are a lot of points of confluence. Mary also told the story in letters many years afterwards and the details were always the same – like how a loaded pistol brushed her pregnant belly. It was as easy as reading a witness statement, and in that sense very similar.

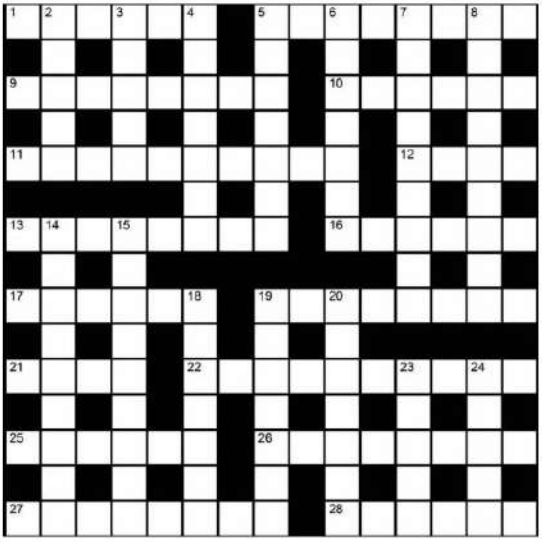
If you continue writing historical fiction, which periods or people would you like to look at?
I'd love to write about Lord Darnley's murder, but I'm not terribly interested in royal families. The Irish Civil War seems to be a story told over and over but never in a way that connects with me. I read recently that the sexual crimes during that conflict are only now being spoken of openly, and I'd like to research that. Whenever there are binary tellings of a story I always think there must be a lot of good stuff hiding in the middle – like a scotch egg.

CROSSWORD

TEST YOURSELF WITH OUR HISTORICAL PUZZLE EVERY ISSUE

CROSSWORD No. 98

Test your history knowledge to solve our prize puzzle – and you could win a fantastic new book



Set by Richard Smyth

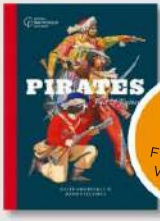
ACROSS

1 Territory purchased by the US in 1867 (6)
5 In the Old Testament, one of three men thrown into a fiery furnace (8)
9 Welsh town once nicknamed Tinopolis (8)
10 Ninth-century king of the Anglo-Saxons, known as 'the Great' (6)
11 Figure from folklore who peeked at Lady Godiva (7,3)
12 J Arthur ___ (1888–1972), flour magnate and film producer (4)
13 Historic Lincolnshire festival (4,4)
16 __ of St Louis, plane flown by Charles Lindbergh (6)
17 See 21
19 Madeleine ___ (b1937), Prague-born US politician (8)
21/17 Personal assistant to a high-ranking officer or official (4-2-4)
22 North African city on the site of ancient Anfa (10)
25 Enslaved woman accused of witchcraft in Salem in 1692 (6)
26 'Your ___', traditional honorific for a female peer (8)
27 Ideology associated with Mary Wollstonecraft, Betty Friedan and Angela Davis (8)
28 See 14 Down

DOWN

2 French city, historically part of Flanders (5)
3 Ancient Turkish city on the Black Sea (5)
4 Host city of the 1996 Olympic Games (7)
5 *The* ___, 2004 biopic of Howard Hughes (7)
6 Dutch humanist scholar (1466–1536) (7)
7 Queen of the 18th dynasty of ancient Egypt (9)
8 London borough, known for its maritime history (9)
14/28 14th-century work by Dante Alighieri (3,6,6)
15 Māori house or lodge (9)
18 Latin for 'I have sinned' (7)
19 Third son of the biblical king David (7)
20 Nickname of the Haitian dictator Jean-Claude Duvalier (4,3)
23 State of India, known for its tea and silk (5)
24 Julia ___ (1912–2004), US cook and food writer (5)

CHANCE TO WIN



BOOK WORTH £20 FOR THREE WINNERS

Pirates: Fact and Fiction
by David Cordingly and John Falconer

HOW TO ENTER

Post entries to **BBC History Revealed, September 2021 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester, LE94 0AA** or email them to **september2021@historyrevealedcomps.co.uk** by noon on **1 October 2021**.

By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in the box below. Immediate Media Co Ltd, publishers of *BBC History Revealed*, would love to keep you informed by post or telephone of special offers and promotions from the Immediate Media Co Group. Please write 'Do Not Contact IMC' if you prefer not to receive such information by post or phone. If you would like to receive this information by email, please write your email address on the entry. You may unsubscribe from receiving these messages at any time. For more about the Immediate Privacy Policy, see the box below.
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SOLUTION Nº 96

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The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of ***BBC History Revealed***) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at www.immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy. The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company London Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 28 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company London Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner-up.
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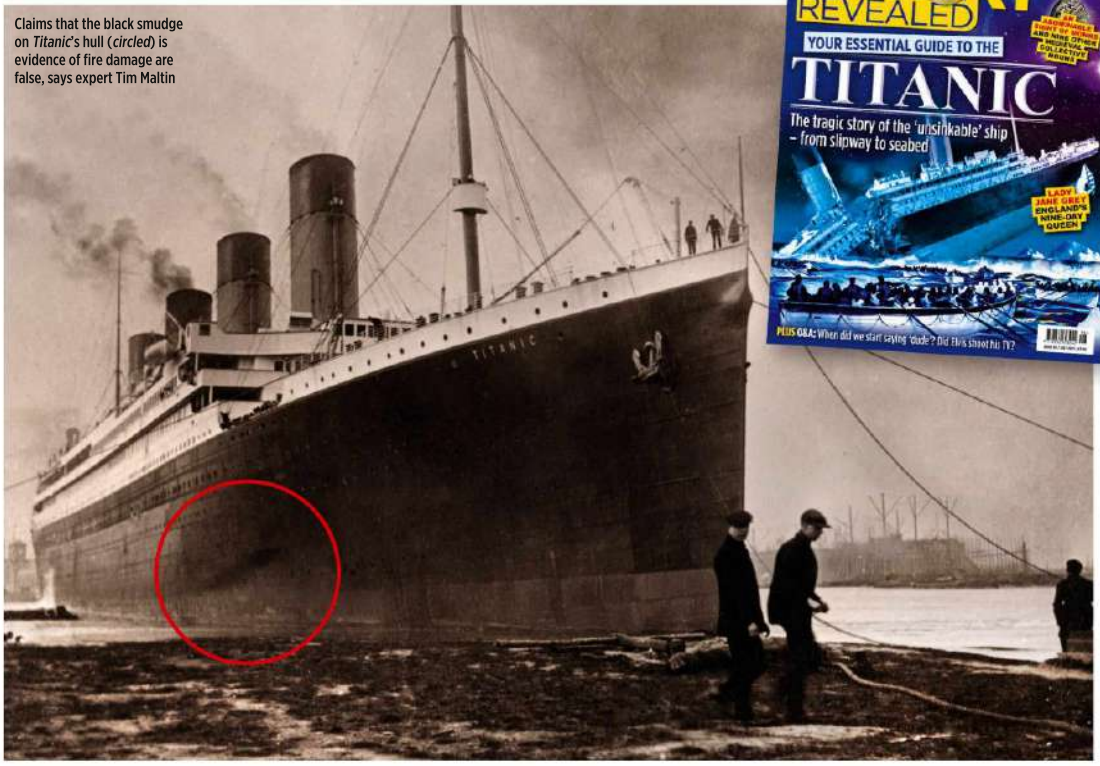
LETTERS



Claims that the black smudge on *Titanic*'s hull (*circled*) is evidence of fire damage are false, says expert Tim Maltin

WHAT IF THE VIKINGS HAD NEVER LEFT HOME?
THE NAZI WAR ON CANCER
BBC
HISTORY REVEALED
YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE
TITANIC
The tragic story of the 'unsinkable' ship – from slipway to seabed
LADY JANE GREY ENGLAND'S NINE-DAY QUEEN
PLUS Q&A: When did we start saying 'dude'? Did Elvis shoot his TV?

FIRE AND ICE

With reference to the essential guide to *Titanic* (July 2021), I thought it would have covered the many other conspiracy theories that have surrounded the sinking, especially the discovery of an album of previously unseen *Titanic* photographs and the suggestion that the ship departed Southampton with a fire in the hold that they failed to extinguish. Was there actually a fire, or is this just a myth?
Brian Joel, Berkshire

Having read the July issue's guide to *Titanic*, I was surprised to find that no mention was made of the fact that the ship had left Southampton with a fire raging in at least one of the coal bunkers. The passengers were not told about this. Had they been told, how many of them would have stayed on board?

The fire had not been extinguished by the time the ship reached the location of the iceberg. There is reputable thought that the fire would have severely buckled the bulkheads, causing more of them to fail and thus letting in more water. It has also been suggested that the reason Captain Smith did not slow the ship as it passed through the iceberg region is that, if he had, the ship would have run out of coal before reaching New York. The fire was mentioned at both inquiries but, astonishingly, was dismissed as not being relevant to the sinking. There also seems to have been attempts to suppress disclosure of the fire.
Steve Fowell, by email

Editor says:
Many thanks for your comments. Unfortunately, we didn't have space to cover all of the many conspiracy theories and myths surrounding *Titanic* in our essential guide. However, since several readers have written in about the fire, we went back to *Titanic* expert Tim Maltin and asked him to clarify...

Tim says:
A few years ago, it was claimed that a photograph from an album discovered in Belfast shows smoke damage or soot on the outside of *Titanic*'s hull (*see image above*). It is true that a coal bunker fire had started in Belfast on *Titanic* at its 'E' watertight bulkhead, and that this burned for four days before eventually being extinguished by *Titanic*'s crew on Saturday 13 April 1912, only one day before its fatal collision with an iceberg. But a careful comparison of the plans of *Titanic* with the photograph shows that the mark on the photograph appears at *Titanic* bulkheads 'C' and 'D', not 'E', where we know from witness testimony the fire actually was.

The smudge on the photograph is in fact exactly that: a smudge on the photograph. Professional photograph analysts call these 'artefacts', as they do not relate to what was actually seen at the time. This smudge was most likely caused during the development of the glass plate negative, which was used to take photographs at this time.

The fire did slightly damage *Titanic*'s watertight bulkhead 'E', but this was not a critical factor in the tragedy, where a single open porthole had a much greater impact on the speed of *Titanic*'s sinking. And there were dozens of open ports on *Titanic* as it slipped beneath the waves.

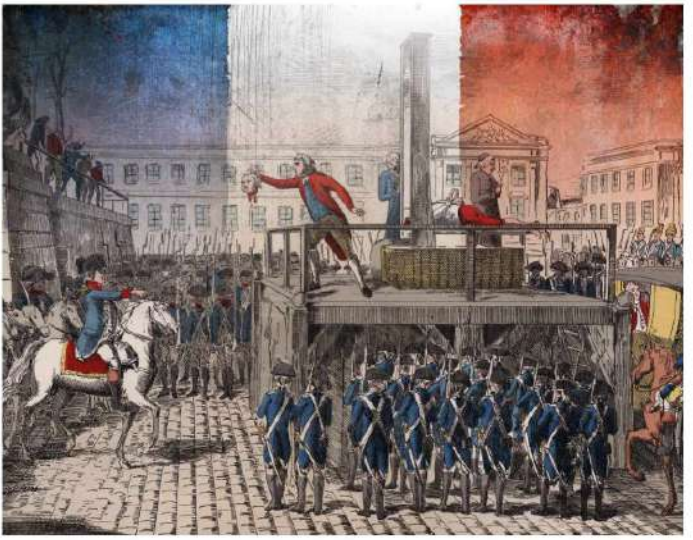
ALAMY X1

NEXT ISSUE

••• ON SALE 2 SEPTEMBER •••

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Discover the bloody events of the French Revolution in our essential guide – from the fall of the monarchy, to the horrors of the guillotine



PLUS... WORLD WAR I'S MOST INGENIOUS POW ESCAPE? 10 UNDERWATER CITIES **THE LONDON BEER FLOOD** SPOTLIGHT ON: CATHERINE DE MEDICI **WHAT IF THE AZTECS HAD DEFEATED THE SPANISH CONQUISTADORS?** AND MUCH MORE...

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The three lucky winners of the crossword from issue 95 are:

L Corbitt, Darlington
J Cox, Bearsted
T Thomas, East Dene

Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Princes of the Renaissance*

Please note, due to Covid-19, we will be unable to post your prize until we are working in the office once more. Please bear with us!

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PHOTO FINISH

ARRESTING IMAGES FROM THE ANNALS OF THE PAST

SETTLING IN 1937

A group of young Basque refugees are gifted toys in Bolton (now part of Greater Manchester), having been evacuated from their homes during the Spanish Civil War. Around 4,000 children – most of them from Spain's Basque region – arrived in Britain in total, and were taken to North Stoneham Camp near Southampton before being transported to different parts of the country.

The conflict had begun in 1936 when an alliance of rightwing political groups, known as the Nationalists, launched an insurrection against Spain's democratically elected Republican government. The war would end in 1939 with an estimated 500,000 people dead and Nationalist leader General Francisco Franco seizing power as a dictator.

GETTY IMAGES

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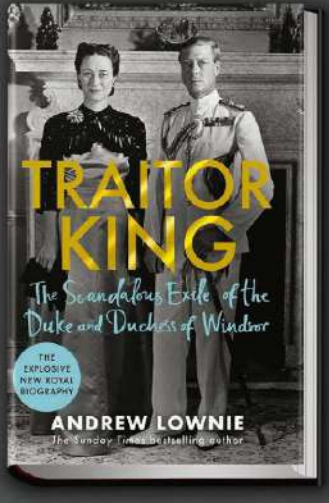
REC Watches is a Danish watch brand founded in 2013. We give new life to classic icons recycling vehicles beyond repair into truly unique timepieces. Every single timepiece incorporates recycled parts from the salvaged icon.

Beginning his astonishing biography at the moment most turn away, bestselling historian Andrew Lownie reveals the dramatic lives of the Windsors post-abdication. This is a story of a Royal shut out by his family and forced into exile, of the Nazi attempts to recruit the Duke to their cause, and of why the Duke, as Governor of the Bahamas, tried to shut down an investigation into the murder of a close friend. It is a story of a couple obsessed with their status, financially exploiting their position and manipulating the media to portray themselves as victims.

Drawing upon hitherto unexplored archives, Lownie shows how their glittering, brittle world was riddled with treachery and betrayal, and why the Royal family never forgave the Duke for choosing love over duty.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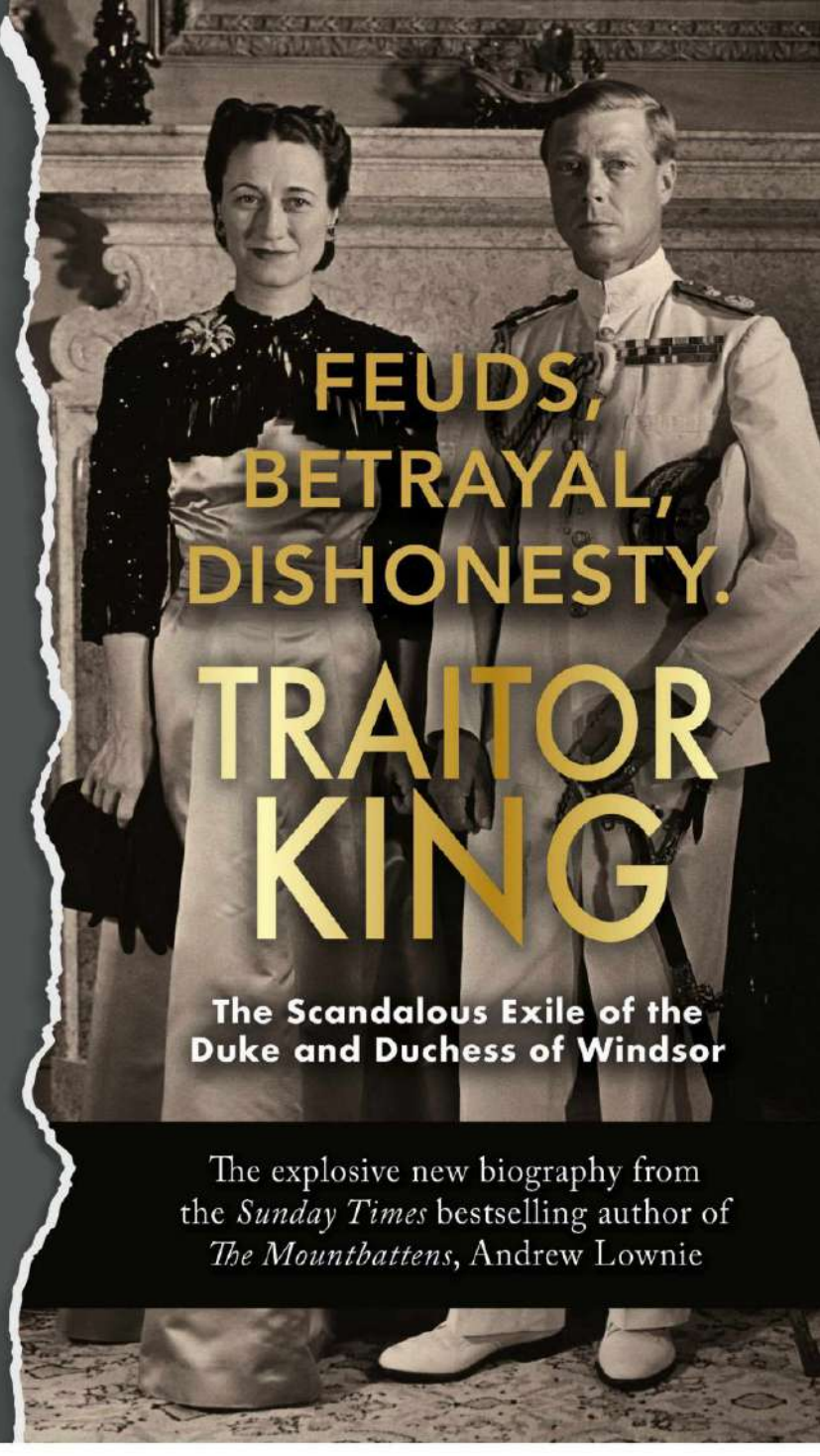
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